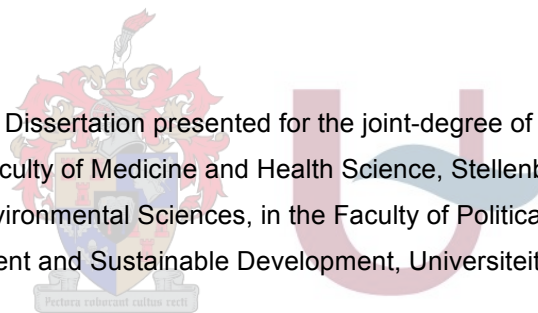


AN INSTITUTIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE TO POLICY
PROCESSES: THE CASE OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY'S
REGIONAL AND NATIONAL VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis explores institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability research in vulnerability-reducing policies in southern Africa. The Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) constitutes the case study. It offers a unique empirical account of issues of research-policy transfer to reduce vulnerability in complex socio-ecological systems (SESs).

Complexity theory provides insights into the research field. It conceptually draws together contextual challenges that contribute to vulnerability in the complex southern African context, the VAC, research processes, and policy processes. Southern Africa is a complex SES with a governing subsystem. The VAC forms part of this subsystem. VAC actors collect contextual information from the SES to inform governing actors of regional vulnerability. Governing actors could then apply the information to make policies reducing regional vulnerability in the SES.

An institutional approach and the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) are useful for researching the research-policy transfer in the VAC policy arrangement. A PAA-analysis is organised from four integrated analytical dimensions: discourses, actors and coalitions, power and resources, and institutional rules. The PAA also uncovers links between the VAC and its context. Regional food emergencies strongly influenced the establishment and evolution of the VAC. The VAC was formed as a consensual platform to address challenges created by parallel-operating multi-sectoral administration structures hindering collaboration to deal with uncertainty, as well as different frameworks producing conflicting food security results.

Discourse findings indicate the VAC mainly interprets vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity. Discursive shifts to broader vulnerability and resilience are stunted by a governing mode that does not accommodate multi-actor governance. Findings from the combined actors and power dimensions show that the process of formalising NVACs within national governments has increased government power, reducing the power of international agencies, whose participation is vital to addressing immediate regional challenges. Untransparent political processes have excluded international agencies from VAC activities and politicised vulnerability information. Institutional rules have emerged, including formalising NVACs within governments; set research frameworks; a minimum set of vulnerability indicators to report; a consultancy culture; multi-agency VAC membership; volunteerism in un-formalised NVACs; and the strategic exploitation of food security information by international agencies focused primarily on food aid interventions.

From these PAA dimension insights, identified catalysts for research-policy transfer include sufficient capacity and funding, technical assistance, communication strategies between research and policy processes, and high-level political support. Research process blockages include a focus on informing emergency interventions, a lack of VAC capacity, neglected communication and dissemination strategies, and politicised research. Policy process blockages include weak national policy processes and a lack of easy access to VAC outputs. The thesis also unpacks contextual factors and spin-offs from VAC processes that perpetuate blockages.

Although currently experiencing challenges, the VAC is ideally positioned to house research-policy transfer initiatives. If policy continues to be a strategy to address regional vulnerability, policies need to acknowledge complex contexts and consequently continuously adapt to changes in complex SESs. Research remains a useful tool for better contextualising adaptive policies.

Opsomming (Afrikaans)

Hierdie tesis ondersoek die institusionele hindernisse en katalisators in die opname van navorsingskennis in beleid wat kwesbaarheid in Suider-Afrika probeer verminder. Die Southern African Development Community (SADC) se Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) vorm die gevallestudie. Dit bied 'n unieke, empiriese verslag van kwessies rondom die gebruik van kennis in beleid wat daarna streef om die kwesbaarheid van komplekse sosio-ekologiese stelsels (SES) soos Suider-Afrika aan te spreek.

Kompleksiteitsteorie bied insig rakende die navorsingsveld en bind die komplekse Suider-Afrikaanse konteks wat bydra tot kwesbaarheid, die VAC, navorsing-, en beleidsprosesse konseptueel saam. Die Suider-Afrikaanse SES bestaan uit sub-stelsels, waarvan een 'n regerende rol vervul. Die VAC vorm deel van dié sub-stelsel en versamel inligting uit die SES om die sub-stelsel oor plaaslike kwesbaarheid in te lig. Die regerende sub-stelsel kan dan die inligting aanwend in beleid wat plaaslike kwesbaarheid in die SES verminder.

'n Institusionele benadering en die Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) is nuttig vir die ondersoek van die navorsingsprobleem. Die navorsingsprobleem word uit vier analitiese PAA dimensies bestudeer: diskoerse, rolspelers en koalisies, mag en hulpbronne, en institusionele reëls. Die PAA manifesteer kontekstuele faktore deur dié vier dimensies, en toon dus die verband tussen die VAC en sy konteks. Die vestiging van die VAC is deur plaaslike voedselsekerheidskrisisse gemotiveer. Die VAC is geskep as 'n konsensus-platform om uitdagings wat as gevolg van parallelwerkende multi-sektorale administrasiestrukture ontstaan het, aan te spreek. Die uitdagings sluit in: beperkte samewerking en ooreenkomste, asook verskillende raamwerke wat teenstrydige kwesbaarheidsresultate geproduseer het.

Diskoersbevindinge dui aan dat die VAC kwesbaarheid hoofsaaklik interpreteer as kwesbaarheid tot voedselonsekerheid. Diskursiewe verskuiwings na breër kwesbaarheid en veerkrag word beperk deur 'n regerende sub-stelsel wat nie multi-rolspelerlidmaatskap akkommodeer nie. Bevindinge van die gekombineerde rolspeler-, koalisies-, mag- en hulpbrondimensies toon dat die proses van die formalisering van NVAC's binne nasionale regerings, die spesifieke regerings se mag laat toeneem, en die mag van internasionale agentskappe verminder. Ondeursigtige politieke prosesse sluit internasionale agentskappe uit VAC aktiwiteite en verpolitiseer kwesbaarheidinligting. Institusionele reëls het gevolglik na vore gekom, insluitend: die formalisering van NVAC's binne regerings; onbuigsame navorsingsraamwerke; 'n minimum kwesbaarheidsaanwysers om te rapporteer; 'n konsultasiekultuur; die multi-agentskapsaard van VAC-lidmaatskap; vrywilligers wat werk in ongeformaliseerde NVAC's; en die strategiese gebruik van inligting oor voedselsekerheid deur internasionale voedselhulporganisasies.

Geïdentifiseerde katalisators vir die gebruik van navorsingsinligting in beleidsprosesse is: voldoende kapasiteit en befondsing, tegniese bystand, kommunikasie tussen navorsing- en beleidsprosesse, en politieke steun op 'n hoë vlak. Blokkasies in die navorsingsproses is: 'n fokus op noodingrypings, 'n gebrek aan kapasiteit in die VAC, verwaarloosde kommunikasie- en verspreidingsstrategieë van VAC-navorsing, en verpolitiseerde navorsing. Beleidsprosesblokkasies is: swak nasionale beleidsprosesse en 'n gebrek aan

maklike toegang tot VAC-navorsing. Die tesis bespreek ook kontekstuele faktore en neweprodukte van VAC-prosesse wat blokkasies laat voortbestaan.

Hoewel uitdagings bestaan, is die VAC in 'n posisie om prosesse wat die gebruik van navorsing in beleidsprosesse bevorder, te huisves. Vir die voortbestaan van beleidsontwikkeling as 'n strategie om plaaslike kwesbaarheid aan te spreek, moet dit komplekse kontekste kan akkommodeer en gevolglik voortdurend kan aanpas by veranderinge. Navorsing bly 'n nuttige hulpmiddel vir beter kontekstualisering van aanpasbare beleid.

Samenvatting (Nederlandstalige)

Dit doctoraat onderzoekt institutionele belemmeringen en opportuniteiten voor de doorwerking van onderzoek over de kwetsbaarheid van gemeenschappen in politiek en beleid van zuidelijk Afrika, met de Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) als gevalstudie. Het VAC vormt een unieke casus om uitdagingen in beeld te brengen rond de uitwisseling van kennis voor beleid tot het verminderen van kwetsbaarheid in complexe sociaal-ecologische systemen (SES), zoals zuidelijk Afrika.

Inzichten uit de complexiteitstheorie werden ingeroepen om het onderzoeksveld goed te omschrijven en vooral de factoren die samen de kwetsbaarheid uitmaken in die complexe zuidelijk Afrikaanse context, alsook de rol van het VAC, onderzoeks- en beleidsprocessen, conceptueel te verbinden. Binnen dit sociaal-ecologisch systeem fungeert ook een bestuurlijk subsysteem, met daarin het VAC. VAC-actoren betrekken essentiële omgevingsinformatie en informeren instanties die de kwetsbaarheid in de regio willen verkleinen. Beleidsmakers worden in staat gesteld die informatie toegepast in te zetten voor hun plaatselijk beleid.

Een institutioneel perspectief en de arrangementenbenadering in het bijzonder (Policy Arrangement Approach, verder PAA) lenen zich uitstekend om wat zich afspeelt rond kennis en beleid in de sfeer van VAC te onderzoeken. Een PAA-analyse wordt opgebouwd rond vier, onderling verbonden analytische dimensies van het arrangement: het discours, actoren en coalities, hun macht en hulpbronnen en ten slotte de spelregels. De benadering laat ook toe na te gaan hoe externe of contextfactoren zich langs diezelfde dimensies uiten en voor dynamiek zorgen in het arrangement. Vooral voedselcrisissen in de regio hebben aanleiding gegeven tot de totstandkoming en ontwikkeling van het VAC-systeem. VAC werd geïnitieerd als een overlegplatform om te ontkomen aan naast elkaar opererende administraties en aldus beter om te kunnen gaan met onzekerheden in de kennis en met tegenstrijdige informatie over de voedsel(on)veiligheid.

Analyse van de interviews en documenten leert, dat VAC kwetsbaarheid hoofdzakelijk invult als kwetsbaar voor voedselonzeekerheid. De gewenste discursieve omslag naar een bredere invulling van kwetsbaarheid en veerkracht, wordt gehinderd door een bestuursstijl die veeleer te typeren is als government dan (multi-actor) governance. Een analyse van coalities en machtsverhoudingen van actoren laat zien dat het positioneren en verder formaliseren van NVACs binnen de nationale overheden een versterking impliceert van wie daar aan de macht is en aldus een krimpende invloed van internationale organisaties, hoewel zij juist essentieel zijn voor dringende uitdagingen in de regio. Het zijn in wezen intransparante politieke processen die hebben geleid tot het weren van internationale agentschappen uit het VAC-systeem en de politisering van de informatie. Er ontstonden regels; ze pakten de NVACs politiek-bestuurlijk in; ze bepaalden onderzoekskaders; een minimum set van kwetsbaarheidsindicatoren om te rapporteren; een cultuur van consultancy; lidmaatschap van externe organisaties in VAC; vrijwilligerswerk in het informele NVAC circuit en een strategisch gebruik van informatie over de voedsel(on)zeekerheid door internationale organisaties, die leven van de organisatie van voedselhulp.

De PAA-analyse liet ook toe enkele omstandigheden te identificeren die bevorderlijk zijn voor het gebruik van onderzoek in beleid: voldoende capaciteit en fondsen, technische bijstand, communicatiestrategieën voor de uitwisseling van kennis in beleidskringen en politiek steun van de top. Belemmeringen voor de doorwerking vanuit het onderzoek zelf zijn de sterke focus op informatieverstrekking voor noodinterventies, aan gebrek aan capaciteit binnen VAC, verwaarlozing in het onderzoek van communicatie- en valorisatiestrategieën en het voorkomen van gepolitiseerd onderzoek. Vanuit de beleidscontext liggen knelpunten bij te zwakke overheden en een gebrek aan vlotte toegang tot de producten van VAC. Dit doctoraat werpt ook licht op enkele van contextuele factoren en bijproducten van VAC die de moeilijke doorstroom van informatie naar beleid bestendigen.

Ondanks al deze uitdagingen is het VAC-systeem goed geplaatst om kennis-beleid interacties meer kansen te geven. Als de beleidsontwikkeling wil blijven inzetten op het verminderen van de kwetsbaarheid in de regio, dan moet ze open staan voor de complexiteit van het domein en er in slagen zich voortdurend aan te passen aan veranderende omstandigheden in het sociaal-ecologisch systeem. Onderzoek blijft alleszins een belangrijk instrument om tot contextgevoelige beleidsontwikkeling te komen.

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Acronyms

ACFS	African Centre for Food Security
AOM	Annual Organisational Meeting
Atlas.ti	Archiv fur Technik, Lebenswelt, AlltagsSprache Text Interpretation
AusAid	Australian Aid
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBTP	Capacity Building and Training Programme
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CoE	Centre of Excellence
DfID	Department for International Development
EFSA	Emergency Food Security Assessment
EPA	Extension Planning Area
FAFS	Framework for African Food Security
FANR	Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FIVIMS	Food Security Information and Vulnerability Mapping System
FNC	Food and Nutrition Council
GEC	Global Environmental Change
GECAFS	Global Environmental Change and Food Systems
HEA	Household Economy Approach
HFA	Hugo Framework for Action
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICP	International Cooperating Partners
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MVAC	Malawian Vulnerability Assessment Committee
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NPC	National Planning Commission
NVAC	National Vulnerability Assessment Committee
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PAA	Policy Arrangement Approach
PD	Primary Document
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RDA	Rural Development Areas

REWU	Regional Early Warning Unit
RHVP	Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RVAA	Regional Assessment and Analysis
RVAC	Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SAVAC	South African Vulnerability Assessment Committee
SC-UK	Save the Children, United Kingdom
SES	Socio-ecological System
SETSAN	Mozambican Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SU	Stellenbosch University
SwaziVAC	Swaziland Vulnerability Assessment Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWGTCB	Technical Working Group on Training and Capacity Building
UA	Universiteit Antwerpen
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UN-Habitat	UN Human Settlement Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAA	Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
ZimVAC	Zimbabwean Vulnerability Assessment Committee

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The aim of and motivation for this research

The overarching aim of this research is to identify and explore institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policy processes that aspire to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa. To do so these policies would need to empower the population in the region, build resilience and decrease international support to eventually make it superfluous. Having worked as a researcher in the field of sustainable development for several years, I was confronted with many research reports and recommendations on reducing vulnerability in southern Africa (Ingram, Erickson & Liverman 2010; Holloway et al. 2013), yet also observed and read reports on pervasive regional vulnerability (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS – UNAIDS 2013; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – FAO 2013; Holloway et al. 2013).

The Global Environmental Change and Food Systems (GECAFS) project of the Earth Systems Science Partnership in particular caught my attention (Ingram et al. 2010). GECAFS was an international, interdisciplinary research project that focussed on understanding the links between food security and global environmental change (GEC). GEC in the context of the GECAFS project refers to changes in climate, freshwater supplies, air quality, nutrient cycling, biodiversity, land cover and soils (Ingram et al. 2010). The project spanned more than 10 years until March 2011 and focused on three global regions, including southern Africa. It provided an extensive overview of the contribution of food systems to GEC and the impact of GEC on food systems. It also outlined ways to increase food security whilst beginning to address the negative social and environmental outcomes of food system activities. Although a strategy was drafted to begin to address the relationships between GEC in food systems in southern Africa, the work never materialised in the region. This was a pivotal point for me, as it crystallised the necessity for exploring a break between relevant research outputs and applications in systematic vulnerability reduction efforts.

This chapter offers a summarised account of the research case study, states the research question, introduces the theoretical perspective for the field of application, defines research-informed policy processes, introduces three generations of knowledge-to-action thinking and boundary management, justifies and briefly outlines the analytical framework, offers an overview of the scientific contribution of this research and explains the structure of the rest of the thesis. The analytical framework and its grounding concepts are further discussed in Chapter Two.

1.2 The case study

The governing elements of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs), jointly referred to as the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) system, constitute the case study for this research. Mandated to "...strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems in order to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions that will lead to a reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region", the SADC VAC offers a unique empirical account of the issues surrounding the use of research in policy processes in a challenging field: vulnerability in complex socio-

ecological systems, including food systems. Chapter Four is dedicated exclusively to contextual factors motivating the establishment of the VAC as well as the narrative of its evolution, but the following shortened background contextualises the research.

1.2.1 The Southern African Development Community

The SADC is an intergovernmental organisation that works to further political and socio-economic cooperation and integration in the southern African region. In 1980 the Frontline States (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) established the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) to support regional development projects that would lessen economic dependence on an apartheid-era South Africa. It was transformed into a development community with the August 1992 signing of the SADC Treaty in Windhoek and accordingly became the SADC (Kandelwal 2004). South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar also became SADC members. Figure 1 indicates a timeline explaining key dates in the formation of SADC and the joining of its members (see Figure 2 for member states with capital cities).

Figure 1: SADC timeline with key historical dates



Source: Adapted from globalEDGE (2015)¹

Four directorates were created as part of the SADC restructuring after the Windhoek Treaty in 1992, one being the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR). This directorate replaced a former system consisting of coordinating units in various member states responsible for specific technical areas such as wildlife, forestry, livestock production, and marine fisheries. Today the FANR accounts for more than half of all SADC programmes, and includes programmes on food security, crop development, livestock production, natural resource management, and agricultural and natural resource research and training (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa – FARA 2014). According to the official SADC website, a fifth directorate has since been added. Except for the FANR, at the time of writing this thesis, the other directorates include: 1) Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment; 2) Infrastructure and Services; 3) Social

¹ For a more detailed SADC historical narrative, see: <http://globaledge.msu.edu/trade-blocs/sadc/history>.

and Human Development and Special Programmes; and 4) Policy, Planning and Resource Mobilisation (SADC 2015).

Figure 2: Map of southern African region with SADC states and their capital cities



Source: <http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0000914/page1.php>.

1.2.2 The Vulnerability Assessment Committee

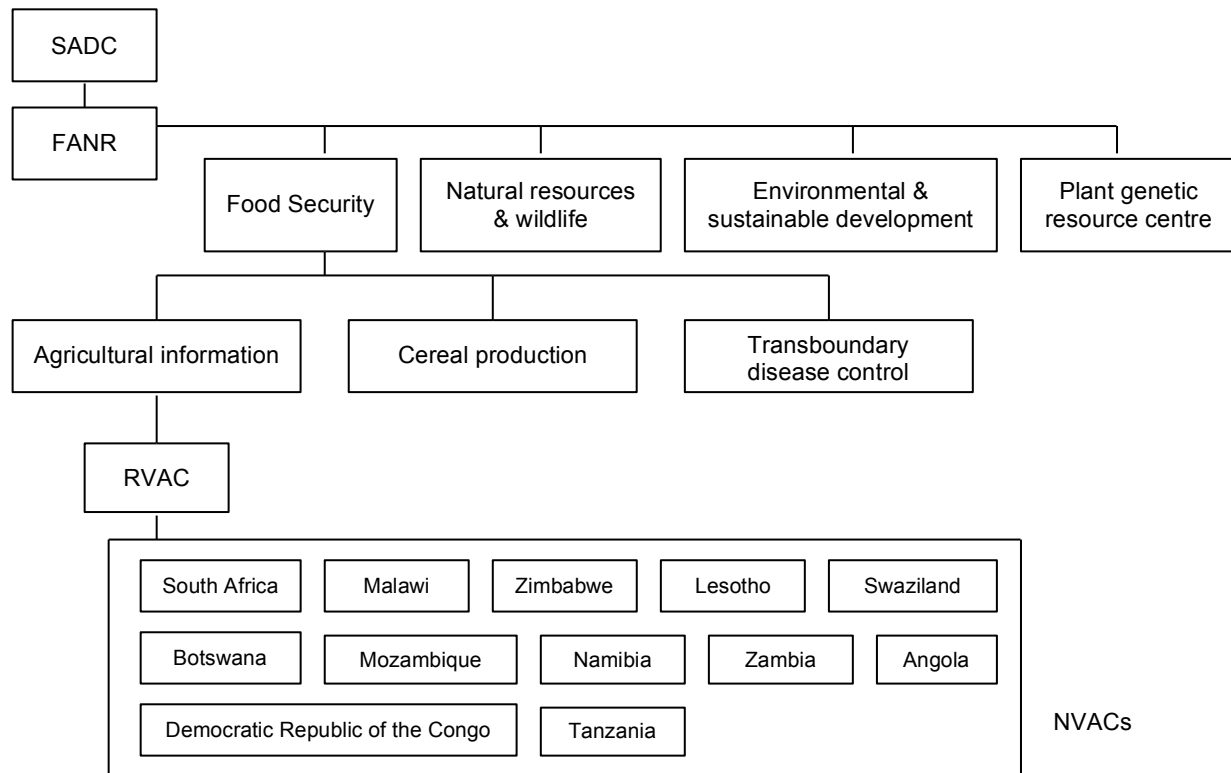
During the 1990s, southern Africa was exposed to a number of extreme droughts with adverse effects on the region's human and animal populations (Holloway et al. 2013). Consequently in 1999 the FANR within SADC endorsed the RVAC to better understand vulnerability in the southern Africa region through conducting research on the issue and sharing the findings with governments and organisations working to reduce regional vulnerability (Vincent & Cull 2009). For an example of typical VAC research outputs see Appendix 1 for an excerpt from the 2012 Regional Synthesis Report, indicating an overview of vulnerability in the region, as well as a few specific countries for that year.

From its inception the RVAC was a multi-agency initiative. An early configuration of the RVAC included representatives of the FANR, SADC's Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU), the SADC Database Project, the World Food Programme (WFP), Save the Children United Kingdom (SC-UK), FAO and Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) (Marsland 2004). Membership has changed through the years, but the RVAC's multi-agency nature remained intact.

In addition to the RVAC, NVACs were formed in each member state to roll out the first emergency food security assessments in those countries during the food security emergencies in the early 2000s (see Figure 3 for a visual representation of the RVAC and NVACs within SADC. Only the NVACs that contributed to the 2012 Regional Synthesis Report are included here). Similar to the RVAC membership, NVACs consisted of members from the respective national governments and International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) active in

those countries (Darcy, Griekspoor, Harmer & Watson 2003).

Figure 3: The VAC within SADC's FANR



The inclusion of government members in NVACs from the inception of the VAC, especially from relevant departments such as national planning, was expected to result in the application of information from vulnerability assessments in national policies and development programmes. ICPs in the respective SADC countries were to offer training, technical assistance and logistical support to relevant NVACs to increase capacity within each member state's government. The ICPs would also have access to vulnerability assessments to inform their own emergency and development programmes, as guided by their respective mandates. The VAC system thus provided a platform for better coordination among governments and key technical agencies involved in vulnerability monitoring and emergency responses, and as such formed a new partnership. As a case study the VAC system consequently provides perspectives on the usage of vulnerability information in policy processes from two sides: from those generating the information, as well as governments responsible for policy generation.

For nine months between 2002–3, the VAC system was able to efficiently coordinate a series of emergency food security assessments in the countries affected by the food security emergency (Darcy et al. 2003). By June 2002, the WFP and FAO had declared 13 million people in southern Africa on the brink of starvation (Misselhorn 2006). The VAC system rolled out emergency food security assessments through the NVACs in the affected countries. These assessments were considered significant contributors to emergency food responses (Mano et al. 2003) that delivered 3.3 million metric tonnes of food aid to the six worst affected countries (Misselhorn 2006).

While the VAC succeeded in building consensus among stakeholders and guiding critical decision-making through the coordination of food security assessments in the most affected countries, it did not contribute to regional disaster management (Mano et al. 2003), nor to long-term planning to reduce regional vulnerability through policy and development programmes. An exclusive focus on handling food crises through informing the food aid programmes of ICPs hindered the stimulation of food availability and access to improved food system resilience (Drimie et al. 2011), not to mention broader livelihood resilience. The exclusive emergency focus meant that “...very little strategic policy analysis on ways of stimulating food availability and improving access to food for the poor” (Drimie et al. 2011:174) was undertaken. Consequently, “[u]nder-informed governments have developed atomistic national food security and famine response policies based on the premise that domestic food crises are primarily caused by local droughts” (Drimie et al. 2011:174). For countries such as Zimbabwe this has become politically convenient, as the weather rather than the country’s political situation is blamed for hunger (Drimie et al. 2011). SADC policy declarations were also not being translated into action plans (Drimie et al. 2011). The RVAC recognised this shortcoming and accordingly developed a programme: *Strengthening Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis in the SADC Region through the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee: A Five Year Programme* (hereafter referred to as the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis or RVAA programme).

Following the successful completion of these food security emergency assessments, the RVAC implemented the RVAA programme in two phases, with an internal review and second-phase planning completed in 2008. Through the RVAA programme, the RVAC recommitted to promoting long-term planning. The overall objective of the programme was also the development of the most recent VAC mandate: “...work to strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems in order to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions that will lead to a reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region²” (RVAA 2005). Based on vulnerability research, each NVAC would produce an annual vulnerability report, which would then be synthesised into a regional synthesis report (see Appendix 1 for an excerpt from the 2012 synthesised report). Arguably with a multi-agency membership structure, these reports would reach the hands of policy makers to inform national policies. At an annual dissemination meeting, the national and regional reports would also be shared with key representatives from the various NVACs and the RVAC.

The RVAA programme also brought a strong focus on formalising the VAC system within national government structures. The reasoning was that formalising NVACs within government structures would increase governments’ ownership of the NVACs, including increased funding from governments and less from external donors, as well as increased usage of vulnerability information in policy processes (see 7.3.2 for interviewee accounts supporting this claim).

In March 2008, an internal review of the RVAA programme was commissioned by the SADC. The funding cycle was to end in September 2008, and it was necessary to review the programme in order to inform the

² Note that this documented mandate is connected specifically to the RVAC, yet bears on the entire VAC system, and is therefore presented as the VAC mandate in this thesis. It is also only referenced here to the original RVAA programme document.

design of a subsequent phase and to mobilise resources. The second phase of the programme was to continue improving regional and national policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions through strengthening national and regional vulnerability assessments and analysis (VAA). Annual activities forming part of the second phase of the RVAA programme consisted of formalising NVACs within their respective governments, VAA, dissemination meetings and Annual Organisational Meetings (AOMs), which aimed to address and improve organisational operations. In 2012, the RVAA programme was extended for a second time until the end of 2016. The new programme document's title revealed a shift in emphasis: *Building Resilience to Climate Change and Other Causes of Poverty*. At the time of writing this thesis, the RVAA programme is thus in its third phase.

There are a number of reports outlining the VAC system's accomplishments over more than a decade, yet none explicitly consider the VAC's work against its self-imposed 2004 mandate as this thesis does. As accounted for in more detail in the rest of this thesis, the VAC has accomplished a great deal towards the first part of the mandate: "...strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems..." Since 1999, the VAC has adopted a number of research frameworks to guide assessments including the Household Economy Approach (HEA) that incorporates Livelihood Mapping, and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) framework. These have been introduced, implemented and refined in different NVACs. Although the VAC system has been unsuccessful in establishing a common methodology to ensure comparability across the region, there have been notable developments towards accommodating a variety of frameworks and methods that draw on annual assessments and analyse existing data sets. Each NVAC thus develops its own VAA tools, drawing on the range of frameworks and methods circulating in the VAC system. As argued later, a diversity of frameworks applied in the VAC contributes to uncertainty.

Preparing their organisation and capacity for long-term resilience planning and implementation through the RVAA programme may be a sensible move on the part of the VACs, yet the second part of the mandate: "...to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions that will lead to a reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region" has received less attention. It can be argued that the VAC system has been successful in informing emergency relief programmes and the development programmes of ICPs, yet these have not yet led to the final part of the VAC mandate: a measurable "...reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region". In fact, there has never been a comprehensive study or continuous monitoring and evaluation to gauge the impact of VAC outputs on regional vulnerability, partly because of comparability issues across the diversity of applied frameworks. Furthermore, national development programmes and policies have not enjoyed the same success as emergency relief efforts and ICP development programmes.

From a thorough document review and interviews with VAC members (detailed in Chapter Three), it emerges that VAA outputs have only contributed to the development of four national policies across the entire region. Only one is currently active in Zimbabwe, whilst interviewees claimed that another Zimbabwean policy was being implemented although not fully approved by government yet. The other two policies belong to Malawi and are still in draft form. These policies are further explored in Chapter Seven. Although the impact of vulnerability assessment on the efficacy of emergency relief efforts and the actual

reduction of regional vulnerability through ICP development programmes are critical areas for further investigation, this research focuses more specifically on the uptake of vulnerability assessments in policy processes with the potential to reduce regional vulnerability. Note that the research goes further than the uptake of research in policy documents, to also investigate the wider processes that lead to these documents.

1.3 The research question

With an understanding of the aim and motivation of this research, as well as an introduction to the case study, the research question is:

What are the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policy processes that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?

This research question was refined during the data-gathering process. The questions I posed in my original PhD proposal were indicative of the fact that I hadn't yet been immersed in the case study. In Chapter Three I present the original questions and how they were transformed and distilled into a single research question (see Box 1 in 3.2).

1.4 A theoretical perspective on governing systems and regional vulnerability

Theories, frameworks and models are often used as interchangeable terms, yet have completely different meanings. Theories suggest the general causal relationships between categories of the elements in frameworks, deeming some more important than others to help explain phenomena (McGinnis 2011). A framework offers a useful structure to identify, categorise and organise various elements of investigated phenomena (McGinnis 2011). A framework thus provides a general set of elements, which is useful for formulating the research questions that have to be addressed to investigate phenomena (Ostrom 2011). Frameworks are also not the same as models. A model takes a specific and defined context into consideration and then specifies functional relationships between framework elements in that specific context (McGinnis 2011) to predict outcomes based on a specific theory (Ostrom 2011).

This research draws on complexity theory to gain insight into the research field, which concerns policy processes aiming to address vulnerability in complex socio-ecological systems. The point of this endeavour is to ultimately offer a model of catalysts for and blockages to the uptake of vulnerability assessments in national policies that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa. This model is presented in Chapter Eight. Complexity theory is applied to conceptualise the research field in 1.4.1–1.4.4, while 1.4.5 and 1.5 relate to the analytical framework: the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA).

1.4.1 Complexity theory in social sciences and key terms

In their book *Homeland Earth: A Manifesto for the New Millennium*, Morin and Kern (1999) coin the term “polycrisis” to explain how the multiple crises facing us today do not exist separately, but overlap and interact to create a complex global crisis within a complex system or systems, depending on how the system or systems are defined. These challenges cannot be addressed sustainably when considered separately. The

challenges emerging and interacting in southern Africa are in part a manifestation of the global polycrisis. To give some examples: the region forms part of sub-Saharan Africa, where 70 per cent of all new global Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infections in 2012 were recorded, and where the epidemic continues to disproportionately affect this larger region (UNAIDS 2013). The 2013 *State of Food Insecurity in the World: The Multiple Dimensions of Food Insecurity* (FAO 2013) reported that although the global number of malnourished people has declined with 17 per cent since 1990–92, sub-Saharan Africa has only modestly improved in recent years. It remains the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment (one in every five people), and sub-Saharan Africa's share in the global number of undernourished people has also increased (now 223 of 842 million undernourished people). In 2013 RIASCO published a report, *Humanitarian Trends in Southern Africa: Challenges and Opportunities*, on the threats likely to confront the southern African region until 2023. The report found that the region experienced 47 international humanitarian emergencies between 2000–12. Moreover, the report found that it is the more frequent, compounding yet less globally notable emergencies that prevent communities from fully recovering, keeping them locked in a cycle of vulnerability (Holloway et al. 2013).

Adger et al. (2011) argue that existing policies with short-term technological fixes to complex challenges fail to meaningfully address the multiple and interacting factors that influence system resilience, including the needs of vulnerable people. Responses that address one problem may unintentionally undermine the capacity of the system to address other problems (Adger et al. 2011). One way to begin to engage with these challenges would be to consider from a complexity theory perspective how they overlap and interact or reinforce each other. Cairny (2012) notes that complexity outlooks also require interdisciplinary approaches.

In this study complexity theory is applied for its valuable insights into the research field, which concerns policy processes aiming to address vulnerability in complex socio-ecological systems. A complexity approach is useful, as vulnerability is the outcome of the interaction of many different overlapping drivers and shocks. The research question—which concerns the transfer of research to policy processes—is not necessarily a complex matter, yet the context in which the concerning process takes place is. The theory is not only applied to help conceptualise the southern African region as a complex system, but also to draw together the region, VAC case study, research processes, policy processes, and vulnerability³. Complexity theory also offers some insights into organisational change.

Before delving into the characteristics of complex systems, it is important to take cognisance of the origins of complexity theory and its limitations in the context of social science. Burnes (2005) writes that we should rather use the plural form, complexity theories, to acknowledge that it is an umbrella term for ideas, theories and programmes from a variety of scientific disciplines including meteorology, biology, physics, chemistry, and mathematics. He also describes complexity theories as controversial with doubts about their validity, as they come from computer models rather than empirical studies. In contrast, Lissack (1999) states that complexity theories are collections of ideas, rather than organised and rigorous theories.

³ 'Vulnerability' in this sense is used to refer to current discourses in the literature and not specifically to VAC interpretations of the concept. See p. 14.

Burnes (2005) argues that applying complexity theories in the social sciences requires an 'act of faith' that such theories are valid and can be transferred from natural to social sciences. On the other hand, Padgett and MacLean (2006:1464) states that the "...imitation of biological science by the social sciences should never be slavish: social systems have no genes, [but] social systems have consciousness". According to Burnes (2005) the application of complexity theories in social sciences nevertheless requires making explicit whether the theories will be applied mathematically, or as a metaphorical device that could provide a means to new insights (Burnes 2005). In the context of this research, complexity theory as explored below is applied metaphorically.

Burnes (2005) offers three complexity theories. The first is chaos theory, which is based on Lorenz's (1979; 1993) work on weather systems. In chaos theory precise laws determine processes in complex systems even though they appear to happen by chance. Burnes (2005) gives the example of how unlikely it is that it will snow in the Sahara, as the weather system in that region has certain boundaries.

The second theory Burnes (2005) discusses is dissipative structure theory, which is based on the work of Prigogine (1997). It relates to complex systems passing through states of instability in which they reach critical points where they may spontaneously self-organise to produce a completely new pattern of behaviour that was unpredictable from its previous state. Both chaos and dissipative structure theory are concerned with whole systems and their populations.

The third theory presented by Burnes (2005) seeks to understand the individual elements of systems and their populations. Complex adaptive system theory proposes that systems consist of large numbers of agents, each with their own rules for behaviour, which require each agent to adjust according to other agents' behaviour. Such systems have the ability to adapt to changes in their environments (Burnes 2005). The work presented in this thesis draws mostly on the ideas of complex adaptive system theory. Klijn (2008) adds two other theories. The first is autopoiesis theory, which is concerned with the self-organisation of complex systems, and the second is path dependency theory, applied in economics.

The very nature of complexity challenges the notion of a definition, but Cilliers (2008:44) argues that: "...we cannot leave the notion of complexity merely dangling in the air; we have to give it some content". He presents a number of distinctions to limit the meaning of complexity without completely restraining it: firstly, he explains that complexity is the characteristic of a system that only exists and emerges as a result of the interaction between the elements of the system. The focus is thus on the relationships between elements, not the characteristics of the elements. The manner in which the VAC emerged out of a vulnerable southern African context is one example of emergence (more about this in Chapter Four).

Secondly, Cilliers (2008) states that a system's structure develops internally through the process of self-organisation—it does not have an external architect. The way in which the RVAC established the NVACs to roll out emergency assessments in southern Africa was a form of self-organisation within the VAC system. Thirdly, Cilliers (2008) differentiates between "complicated" and "complex" systems, explaining that the

former can be taken apart to understand it (as with a jumbo jet), whereas the latter loses the very emergent properties one wishes to understand when it is taken apart (as with vulnerability).

Studying vulnerability as a complicated problem instead of a complex problem would be taking a linear approach and most likely produce un-contextualised solutions that could potentially perpetuate vulnerability (Adger et al. 2011). It is clear that to understand the establishment of the VAC, a system that emerged out of the need to assess and address regional vulnerability, it would be useful to consider the relationships between the elements of the southern African region and thus take a complex systems approach. One would not, for example, understand how the VAC system emerged if considering separately the humanitarian emergencies or the VAC's coordination of interventions by ICPs. In this research, the southern African region is therefore conceptualised as a complex system. Cilliers' (2008) idea of the content of complexity thus takes a broader perspective, useful for a metaphorical application in a social science study.

Burnes (2005) notes that more specific definitions will depend on the perspective of the discipline it is applied in. Generally Burnes (2005) explain that complexity theories are concerned with the emergence of order in systems that are dynamic and non-linear, operating at the edge of chaos. Governed by a certain set of rules these systems are constantly changing through self-organisation to produce seemingly irregular patterns of behaviour. These systems are largely unpredictable.

Klijn (2008) explains complex systems as consisting of interacting parts behaving in specific contexts according to rules. Even without interacting with each other, responses to changes in such systems' environments result in emergent patterns, which cannot be traced back to individual agents. Klijn (2008) thus agrees that such systems have complex dynamics that result in self-organising, yet unpredictable behaviour.

Despite the limitations of reducing a complex phenomenon to a manageable representative model, Cilliers provides a list of characteristics to help us identify complex systems (Cilliers 1998; 2009): Complex systems are a) open systems embedded within contexts that may also be complex. These systems b) have many components that c) interact dynamically to exchange information or energy. These interactions are d) rich with e) multiple and sometimes f) non-linear feedback loops where small changes can lead to large implications elsewhere in the system or vice versa. g) Components could affect one another without being directly connected. h) Past behaviours of the system accumulate to form its history and will most likely influence future behaviours. i) The system only exists because of the interactions of its components, which leads to emerging results. j) The system also exists as a whole and cannot be represented by any of its individual components. Cairny (2012) also offers a list of complexity theory themes which overlap with that of Cilliers' characteristics f), h), i), and j). With regards to the history of the system, Cairny (2012) adds that systems are sensitive to initial conditions and that these contribute to the history that creates path dependence within the system. Adger et al. 2011:759 offer a policy related example of this: "...all policies are constrained by global economic structures and by the path dependency of previous decisions". Finally Cairny (2012) also talks about the dissipative nature of complex systems.

Cilliers' (1998; 2009) characteristics, incorporating some of Cairny's (2012) complexity themes, can be

applied to the southern African region: a) it is an open system embedded in larger global ecological, economic, and political environments, which can all also be defined as complex systems. Components of southern Africa such as regional ecological, economic, and political systems interact and create the drivers that support or undermine regional livelihoods. The region b) has many components such as natural resources, governments, and populations. These components c) interact dynamically to exchange information or energy, such as the exchange of information about upcoming natural disasters between national early warning systems across the region, or the dynamic interactions of regional weather patterns. It is evident that d) these interactions are rich, e) with multiple and sometimes f) non-linear feedback loops. Early warning information shared between countries could have a direct impact on local communities g) without these components being directly connected. Past events, such as a drought in one harvest season, or unrevised continued food aid programmes will likely affect future food provisioning, and as such act as the h) collected histories or memory of southern Africa. i) The status of regional livelihoods is constantly emerging as regional components exchange information or energy. Various levels of livelihood security emerge from southern Africa depending on different interacting components. j) It is impossible for one component, such as a government, or even the SADC, to represent the entire southern African region. Based on these ten characteristics, the southern African region can thus be recognised as a complex system.

Cilliers (2001) also explains that although we can never fully represent complex realities using models, they enable us to explore complexity. By clearly stating the boundaries of a model, the included and excluded system elements are made explicit (Cilliers 2001). For the sake of this research, the southern African region's geographical borders reach as far as those of the member states belonging to the intergovernmental organisation, the SADC, headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. The system, however, also includes all the components and activities within the region that determine regional livelihoods. SADC itself is an organisation and thus an actor or element in the larger southern African region, which is the complex system related to this research. The key focus of this research is on the governing elements pertaining to the VAC. The discrete set of elements being investigated concern policy processes and does not include all the elements of governing. At the same time, policy processes are affected by and affect other elements of the regional governing system. Some of these relationships are accommodated through the application of the analytical PAA framework discussed in the next chapter. The framework accommodates policy processes on two levels (the governing, and day-to-day policy levels) and as such creates the opportunity to explore linkages between policy processes and governing systems.

Cilliers (2001) argues that although boundaries are essential for a system's identity, boundaries that are less defined and allow for renegotiation improve the vitality of the system. The boundaries of the southern African system are thus continuously adapted as vulnerability within the region is explored. The investigation acknowledges flexible geographical borders, global alignments and multi-level phenomena as framed by VAC discourses (see Chapter Five). A clear example of the need to continuously redefine boundaries is related to the case of climate change, as a global phenomenon with specific regional implications. Another example of negotiable boundaries that is critical to this research is boundary work, explored further in 1.4.4. Adger et al. (2011) also argue that more flexible institutions allow for responsive and flexible solutions at the

appropriate scale and thus aid adaptive capacity (further explored in 1.4.4).

Useful complexity theory terms applied to engage with the research field require some clarification, including: feedback, shocks, robustness, resilience, adaptive capacity, and vulnerability. Gallopín (2006) calls for greater clarity on the basic meaning of these concepts to prevent messiness in the study of complex systems.

Feedback loops allow systems to read and respond to changes in their internal and external environments, and thus to self-organise (Folke 2006), mitigate, and adapt. Stacey in Klijn (2008:302) explains: “[P]ositive feedback (reinforcing) drives change, while negative feedback (balancing and moderating) maintains the stability of the system”. Early warning systems, for example, inform communities to self-organise and prepare for approaching natural disasters. This is only one example; there are multiple feedback loops in complex systems. Erickson (2008) distinguishes between socio-economic feedbacks (for example: livelihoods, consumer advocacy, indigenous knowledge and policy processes) and environmental feedbacks (for example water flow, movement of greenhouse gases, and temperature fluctuations). Both kinds of feedback loops are important for complex systems to self-organise and adapt. In this thesis I focus specifically on socio-economic feedbacks; if and how the VAC system feeds information back to the southern African governing subsystem, and how this information is used to reduce vulnerability, which is the VAC’s mandated outcome. Feedback would include any efforts made towards communicating vulnerability information back to the governing subsystem, such as advocacy, policy dialogues, and dissemination strategies.

Janssen et al. (2007) explain that shocks or disturbances are different to the well-understood predictable variability in complex adaptive systems. Predictable changes include regular and continuous variations such as daily temperature changes. Conversely, shocks are unexpected changes that disrupt the flow of complex systems, such as an economic recession, a hike in food prices, drought, flood, or disease outbreak. The scale of the system (Gallopín 2006), or the manner in which its boundaries have been described, determines whether the shock is internal or external: for example, a drought in Zimbabwe would be external to the VAC system, yet internal to the geographical southern African region.

It is also important to differentiate shocks from drivers. A driver is whatever perpetuates a specific system property, whether robustness, resilience, or vulnerability; the HIV/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic in southern Africa is one example of a driver of vulnerability, since the region forms part of sub-Saharan Africa where 70 per cent of all new global HIV infections in 2012 were recorded, and the epidemic continues to disproportionately affect this larger region (UNAIDS 2013). Poverty is another example, as it keeps the population financially unable to cope with or recover from shocks such as food price hikes. However, the distinction between shocks and drivers is not always as clear. In some instances shocks can also become drivers when they are not once off events. The 2013 Ebola outbreak could for example be seen as an original shock, which transformed into a driver of vulnerability in western Africa.

Robustness is the ability of a system to cope with shocks without undergoing significant changes in its

structure or function (Young 2010; Anderies et al. 2004). Robustness is thus a static system property (Scholz et al. 2012) and does not accommodate change after being exposed to a shock (Gallopín 2006). Robustness (as with resilience and vulnerability) can be a wanted or unwanted characteristic of a system. For example, if the boundaries of the system were changed to consider the HIV/AIDS epidemic a system in itself, it would be considered a robust system since no cure has yet been developed for the disease. The robustness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, conceived as a system, is unwanted.

The resilience of complex systems can be defined as: the amount of change systems can undergo while sustaining controls on structure and function; their capacity to self-organise; and the degree to which systems can learn and adapt to shocks (Carpenter et al. 2001; Cumming et al. 2005, Folke 2006). Adger et al. (2011:758) provide the following definition: “Resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks”. A resilient system would undergo some changes in order to still fulfil its purpose.

As will be further discussed in 5.3, the concept of resilience has in recent years been applied in development and humanitarian aid discussions as a common language bridging these fields (Béné, Wood, Newsham & Davies 2012; Levine, Pain, Bailey & Fan 2012). It became a prominent concept as development and humanitarian partners became frustrated with the need for repeated massive aid efforts in the same areas of the world (Levine et al. 2012). Adger et al. (2011) write that resilience theory emerged as a response to observations of surprising behaviours in ecosystems. The framework focuses on understanding processes of change. Applied to systems managed and influenced by the human population, the framework allows for the assessment of long-term sustainability within Socio-ecological Systems (SESs). Although forces that threaten the survival of SESs may be outside the control of the system, such forces may also be a direct result of deliberate human actions, including actions aimed at adapting to environmental changes (Adger et al. 2011). Adger et al. (2011) further explain that according to this resilience framework, the ability to adapt is predicted according to three characteristics: 1) A system’s susceptibility to change while still retaining structure and function; 2) The system’s ability to self-organise; and 3) The adaptive capacity of the system. According to Adger et al. (2011), in combination these factors determine the resilience of a system.

Adger et al. (2011) and Gallopín (2006) defines adaptive capacity differently. Adger et al. (2011) includes it in the definition for resilience, whilst Gallopín (2006) sees it as a separate concept. Whereas a resilient system will undergo some changes in order to still fulfill its purpose, Gallopín (2006) writes that adaptive capacity refers to more significant changes in structure and function to survive. The adaptive capacity of a system thus very closely relates to its resilience, yet Gallopín (2006) distinguishes between the two. In the SADC, a documented example of resilience as defined by Gallopín (2006) is that of small-scale farming livelihoods in parts of Mozambique and South Africa in adapting to climate variability and change through agricultural innovation. Through adaptation, farmers are maintaining livelihoods at previous levels in the face of climate variability and can thus be considered resilient (Osbaahr et al. 2010). Adaptive capacity, as defined by Gallopín (2006) would refer to these same farmers moving to the city to look for alternative employment to sustain their livelihoods. Although seeing it as part of resilience, Adger et al. (2011) also write specifically about the efforts to increase adaptive capacity:

The physical and social elements of adaptive capacity are found at all organizational scales, from

individuals to nations. However, adaptive capacity also requires the ability to mobilize these elements...Responses developed at larger scales may actively limit or undermine the range of responses at the local level, effectively inhibiting the sources of resilience that are available.

(Adger et al. 2011:763-4)

In this thesis, resilience and adaptive capacity are considered as closely related, yet separate concepts as explained by Gallopin (2006).

As will be discussed in Chapter Five, the VAC has come to interpret 'vulnerability' as vulnerability to food insecurity and related issues. It is important to note here that the interpretation of vulnerability by the VAC was developed before the definitions of complex concepts as presented in this chapter were written. By starting with the academic definition of vulnerability, I do not wish to take away from the dynamic emergent process through which the VAC came to define vulnerability. However, I would like to explore if the VAC's vulnerability discourse may have contributed to the persistence of regional vulnerability as defined in academic discourses (see Chapter Five).

Conceptually, vulnerability becomes relevant once a system's robustness is overwhelmed by a shock and its resilience needs to take over; the more robust and resilient a system, the less vulnerable it is (Young 2010). The system's vulnerability or sensitivity thus exists as a system property before the system is exposed to a shock (Gallopin 2006). Although a system may be vulnerable, it could exist unaffected as long as it is not exposed to a shock (Gallopin 2006). The probability of the occurrence of a shock, the type of shock, its magnitude, and its persistence all contribute to the shock's impact on the system, or the degree to which its vulnerability will be revealed (Gallopin 2006).

Gallopin (2006) adds that vulnerability is the chance for a change or transformation once a system has been exposed to a shock. A significant transformation refers to a structural system change that is relatively permanent and profound (Gallopin 2007). Depending on interventions, the system may either become less or more vulnerable.

In the VAC case, vulnerability could for example refer to the sensitivity of child-headed households to drastic increases in food prices, or the sensitivity of a coastal community to a tsunami. These communities are vulnerable to these shocks even before they occur. Once these shocks occur, vulnerability could be perpetuated or increased, or an opportunity may present itself to reduce vulnerability. Holloway et al. (2013) make the argument that sub-Saharan Africa, including the SADC region, has remained and become more vulnerable in the presence of frequent and compounding smaller-scale emergencies. Communities are thus almost constantly in a state of emergency, which prevents them from building the resilience or adaptive capacity necessary to recover from shocks.

Birkmann (2011) discusses four risk and vulnerability indicators. The first is the Disaster Risk Index by the United Nations Development Programme, which measures vulnerability by dividing the number of people killed in natural disasters by the frequency of disasters. The higher the result, the more vulnerable a

population is considered to be. The second is the Hotspots Project conducted by the World Bank and Columbia University. This project endeavours to map the world's most vulnerable spots. The third is the Americas Indexing Programme by Columbia University for the Inter-American Development Bank. It has more indicators than the Disaster Risk Index to provide a more disaggregated and holistic view. These three indicators are relevant on a global scale. On a more local level, Birkmann (2011) discusses the community-based risk index, which uses 47 indicators to identify and quantify risk characteristics within communities.

"Ultimately, vulnerability, resilience, and adaptive capacity (and robustness) are different manifestations of more general processes of response to changes in the relationship between open dynamical systems and their external environment" (Gallopín 2006:302).

1.4.2 Southern Africa as a complex socio-ecological system and its governing subsystem

To understand how governing structures and policy processes fit into the complex southern African system, and how policy can address vulnerability, I draw on work led by Elinor Ostrom (2009). Her work was motivated by the need to understand governing⁴ in complex contexts. Although the key focus of this research is policy processes specifically, a consideration of the larger governing system contextualises the research.

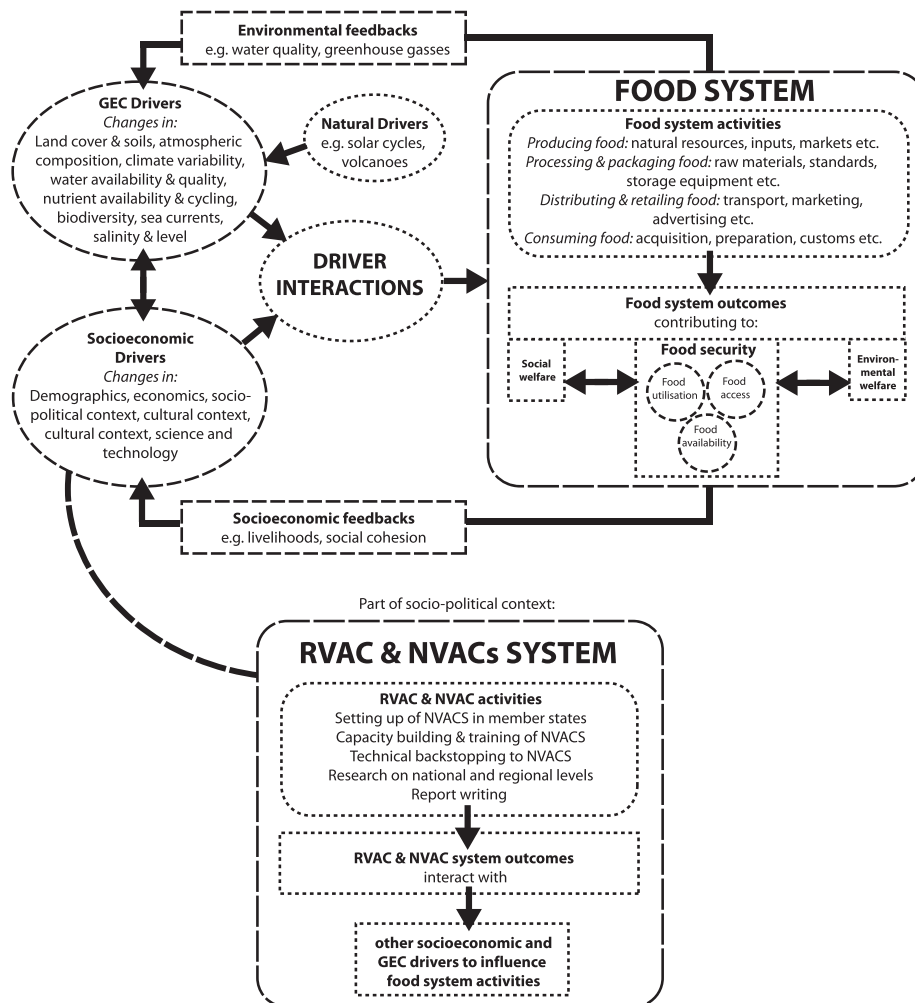
Since complex contexts have the potential for dramatic shifts, whether social or ecological, they require policy choices in the face of catastrophes (Anderies & Janssen 2013) and uncertainty, emerging from conflicting approaches to address such catastrophes. Ostrom (in collaboration with others) accordingly developed the Socio-ecological System (SES) Framework. A complex SES consists of both sociological and ecological elements, which interact on a range of spatial and temporal scales to contribute to human survival (Ostrom 2009). Cilliers' complexity characteristics relate to Ostrom's work.

The boundaries of SESs depend on the system of focus. The southern African region in its totality could be conceptualised as a SES, but so can the food system that exists in the region. The GECAFS project referenced in 1.1 offers a useful conceptualisation of food systems as SESs. Food provisioning is determined by the interactions between open biophysical and socio-economic systems working on a range of temporal and spatial levels (Ingram & Brklacich 2002). These interactions are the drivers for food system activities (Ericksen, Stewart, Dixon, Barling, Loring, Anderson & Ingram 2010). Food systems are intertwined with culture, politics, communities, economies and ecosystems, best described as the integration of humans and the environment or linked socio-ecological systems (Carpenter, Walker, Anderies & Abel 2001; Ericksen 2008).

Figure 4 depicts the southern African food system as a SES and indicates how the VAC fits into the system. The VAC aims to inform socioeconomic changes through its policies and programmes, which are informed by the research it conducts on the status of vulnerability in the region. In line with the GECAFS project, the figure also specifically shows the feedback loops between the food system and GEC.

⁴ Although Ostrom uses the term 'governance' in her model, I've replaced it with 'governing'. A discussion of the government-governance continuum in the next chapter explains how the term 'governance' has been increasingly applied to refer to a state of governing by multiple actors and not just government. In the past the term 'governance' has been used interchangeably with governing, yet it would create confusion if I did so in this thesis.

Figure 4: The complex southern African food system, its drivers, feedbacks and relation to the VAC



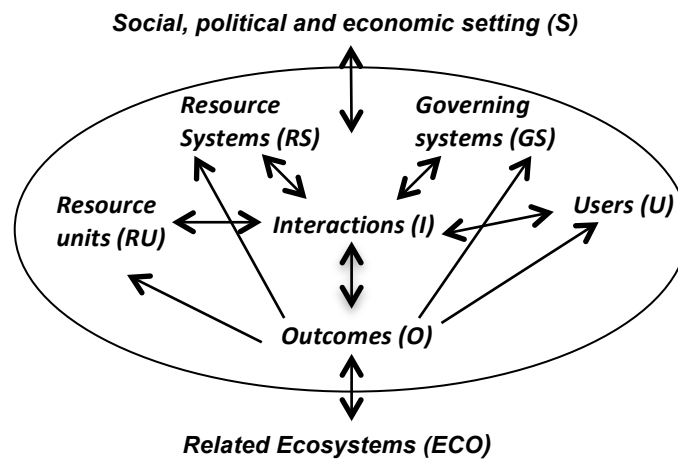
Source: Adapted from Ericksen et al. (2010:28)

The GECAFS work resonates with Ostrom's SES framework. According to Ostrom (2009) SES elements belong to various subsystems that are relatively separate in an SES, yet interact to produce outcomes at the SES level, which in turn feed back to subsystems and their elements, as well as other overlapping larger and smaller SESs (see Figure 5). An example of such feedback is how people rely on natural resource systems to produce food, yet may engage with the units in these systems in such a way that they are degraded and in turn undermine food security. Such practices may include fertiliser usage causing carbon emissions, and deep tillage causing soil degradation. A food system would therefore also be a good example of a SES.

Ostrom (2009) includes a number of subsystems in the SES framework (see Figure 5): (i) resource systems such as water cycles in a geographical area; (ii) resource units such as the amount of flows of water; (iii) governing systems such as governments and other organisations with specific regional governing rules; and (iv) users or individuals relying on the region for sustenance. Each subsystem can be divided into multiple second-level variables such as the size of a resource system, mobility of a resource unit, level of governing,

and the user's knowledge of the resource system. These are further composed of deeper-level variables not discussed in this thesis.

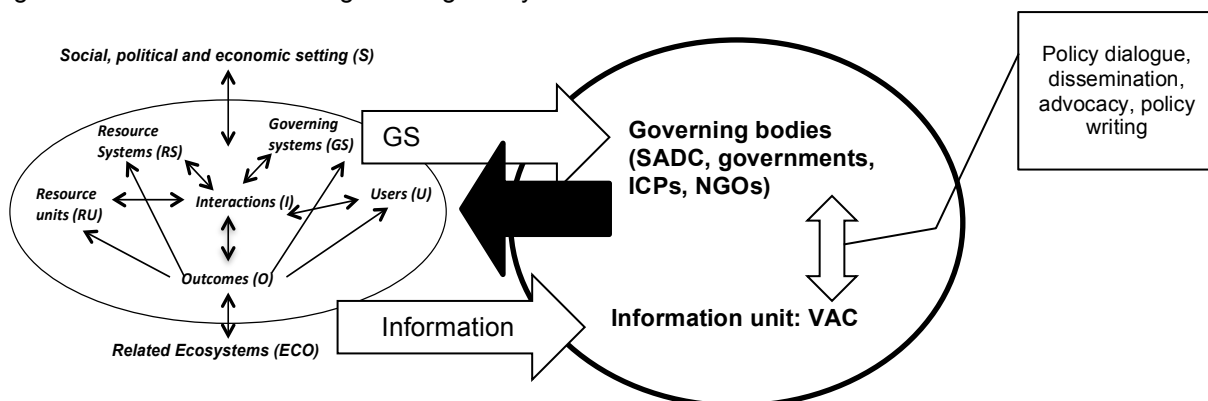
Figure 5: The core subsystems in a SES framework



Source: Adapted from Ostrom (2009)

Applying the SES framework to southern Africa, one can recognise the governing subsystem, which includes the SADC, member state governments, ICPs and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). The VAC also forms part of this governing subsystem. The role of the VAC within the southern African governing subsystem is to collect information from the southern Africa SES and then inform the governing subsystem of the status of regional vulnerability, in order for the governing subsystem to make informed decisions to reduce regional vulnerability in the larger southern African SES (see Figure 6). VAC outputs could for example include VAA reports to inform national policies (see Appendix 1), ICP development programmes, and food aid interventions. According to the VAC mandate, the outcome of these efforts should be a reduction of regional vulnerability. Activities between the governing bodies and the VAC within the governing subsystem could include policy dialogue, dissemination of information, advocacy, and policy writing (see Figure 6), and were earlier identified as feedback loops.

Figure 6: The VAC within the governing subsystem of the southern African SES



As the VAC shares members with the governing bodies constituting the governing subsystem, the VAC and governing bodies could also be illustrated as overlapping. The governing subsystem could potentially then use vulnerability information generated by the VAC to change actor or user behaviour by feeding new rules

or incentives back to actors through (for example) policies. The VAC could thus also have been conceptualised as a knowledge arrangement, but due to its mandate and the aim of this study, it is conceptualised as a policy arrangement. As defined in Chapter Three, the boundaries of the VAC system contain the bodies making up the VAC: the SADC FANR, RVAC, NVACs and RVAA Programme Management Unit (PMU). The context of the VAC system is limited to manifestations of influences that bear on the VAC within the southern African region, whether influenced from outside or inside the region.

1.4.3 Complexity theory and organisational change

Returning to complexity theory, Burnes (2005) offers some insight into its application to investigate organisational change⁵. He explains that authors on the topic argue that organisations could be compared to natural systems, as they are dynamic, non-linear, governed by a set of rules, and have unpredictable outcomes (Burnes 2005). According to Burnes (2005) there have been two approaches to change in organisational study history. The first was a planned approach that existed between the 1950s–80s. Kurt Lewin and the Organization Development Movement were mostly responsible for this planned approach to change. This approach assumed that change happened through programmes aimed at improving operations and the effectiveness of humans, but towards the end of its lifetime became exposed as too linear and static, only able to accommodate slower changes (Burnes 2005).

In the early 1980s it was replaced by an emergent approach, when the Culture-excellence school started calling for more flexible organisational cultures that would promote innovation and entrepreneurships through bottom-up, continuous and co-operative change. According to Burnes (2005) the rationale for emergent change was based on the belief that environmental opportunities, demands, and constraints shaped decisions. These decisions evolved over time and were the outcome of cultural and political processes within organisations (Burnes 2005).

The emergent approach produced three change models: a) The incremental model of change (a process of one change at a time), b) the punctuated equilibrium model (with organisations experiencing long periods of stability and short bursts of fundamental change), and c) the continuous transformation model (which rejected a) and b) to show that in order to survive, organisations had to change continuously and fundamentally) (Burnes 2005). The continuous transformation model was based on complexity theory concepts. Within this thesis, changes within the VAC are also considered from this angle – how has changes in the VAC related to its mission to survive and ultimately, its survival?

In conclusion, Burnes (2005) argues that the application of complexity theory to organisational studies have certain implications. Such applications call for the promotion of structures, policies and practices that allow power equalisation and freedom for self-organisation, which in turn would be aimed at allowing adaptations to environmental changes. These adaptations will be informed by continuous innovation according to order-generating rules (Burnes 2005). Cairny (2012) warns against an over-focus on rules, which will ultimately

⁵ See Burnes (2010) for a list of authors applying complexity theory to understand organisations and change, including Brown and Eisenhardt (1997), Fitzgerald (2002), Hock (1999), MacIntosh and MacLean (2001), Stacey et al. (2002), Bechtold (1997), Black (2000), Boje (2000), Choi et al. (2001), Gilchrist (2000), Lewis (1994), Shelton and Darling (2001), Tetenbaum (1998), and MacBeth (2002).

leave minimal room for agency and the role of policy makers. He encourages cognisance of the fact that although rules place limits on agency, such rules are also constructed, destroyed and replaced because of agency (Cairny 2012).

1.4.4 Complexity theory in public administration studies and addressing vulnerability through policy

There may be a variety of legitimate approaches to reduce vulnerability in the SADC region, however this thesis focuses specifically on policy processes and the use of research outputs to develop more contextualised policy processes and policies that aim to reduce vulnerability, and increase resilience and adaptive capacity. The VAC system has been conceptualised as a potential information feedback loop to the complex southern African governing system. One part of the VAC mandate is to monitor and inform the reduction of vulnerability through policy, which is another feedback loop. The VAC is therefore also portrayed as a policy arrangement, consisting of discourse, actors and coalitions, power and resources, and institutional rules, as described in 1.4.6. The VAC is ideally positioned to gather relevant vulnerability information and inform policy. This is a useful metaphor, but not the first of its kind. Complexity approaches have also more generally been applied in public administration studies.

Klijn (2008) describes two shifts in public administration studies, which relate to the shifts in change studies described by Burnes (2005) in the previous section. Originally public administration was seen as consisting of stable elements and appearances of government and formal structures with rational actors making calculated decisions (Klijn 2008). However, theorists soon realised that such scenarios were the exception and not the rule, and that policy processes were generally more complex (this is also discussed in the next chapter). Consequently, multi-actor approaches stressing interactions and the dynamic character of policy processes began to emerge (Klijn 2008). Klijn (2008) also argues a second shift to complexity approaches, which was enhanced by the shift from government to governance (see 2.3). The governance shift also brought along a shift of focus to networks (Klijn 2008). As complexity theories⁶ attempt to understand change and the dynamics of systems as a result of complex interactions of system parts, they provide useful concepts to begin to engage with the dynamics of policy processes.

Cairny (2012) explains that complexity theories have been applied to public policy literature in two ways. The first approach engages directly with complexity theory, depicting policy structures and processes as complex. Butler and Allen (2008) also conceptualises policy implementation processes as forming part of complex self-organising systems, explaining that policy processes take on unpredictable behaviour once they are interpreted at local levels with their own requirements. Cairny (2012) agrees with Burnes (2005) that complexity theory is then applied metaphorically. The second approach highlights the complex characteristics of policy processes without explicitly using complexity language.

Klijn (2008) offers three complexity concepts particularly useful in public administration studies. The first concerns non-linear dynamics. Although an equilibrium or deadlock may exist within a policy process for a long time, a look into the dynamic positive and negative feedback loops maintaining this deadlock may offer

⁶ Klijn (2008) agrees with Burnes (2005) in using the plural form.

some insight into moving the policy process along (Klijn 2008). In this research the analytical PAA framework introduced in the next chapter is applied to explore the dynamics of the VAC.

Secondly Klijn (2008) argues that self-organisation is a useful concept, as it relates to the development, destruction and replacement of rules according to which policy processes operate. As will also be explored in the next chapter, one of the dimensions of the analytical framework is specifically concerned with rules.

Finally, "...co-evolution essentially means that organisms are related to each other and that the adaptation of one particular organism to its environment influences the entire environment in which other organisms function" (Klijn 2008:309). Klijn (2008) argues that as a concept it is useful to investigate the relationships between projects on the local level that require resources and support, and policy streams on a governing level that need results to evaluate the relevance of political ideas. Klijn (2008) conceptualises these two levels as consisting of different networks and thus forming different systems, however in this research they are considered as two levels within the same VAC system.

Cairny (2012) offers some valuable lessons learned from efforts to apply complexity theory to policy processes. Such approaches challenges the appropriateness of top-down control, preferring instead soft management methods that allow a greater degree of freedom to learn from experiences and adapt accordingly. Adger et al. (2011) agree that more flexible institutions encourage diverse knowledge sharing across stakeholder levels. In some instances they state that such institutions even share authority and responsibility for decision making, which ultimately improves sensitivity to specific geographical and cultural contexts (Adger et al. 2011). Adger et al. (2011) quote Ostrom to argue that greater institutional diversity provides the resources to cope with sudden changes, but also state that this diversity would ultimately have to be applied. They also explain the relevance of feedback loops for learning:

Learning is more likely if feedbacks occur soon relative to action and if those most affected by feedbacks are those responsible for the action. Slow feedbacks, those that are spatially distant, or those that are masked by short-term gains in economic or productivity measures are less likely to result in changes in the response.

(Adger et al. 2011:762).

Secondly Cairny (2012) states that an awareness of the complexity of policy processes prepares one for the unintended consequences of policy implementation. The application of complexity theories in policy studies requires greater use of trial-and-error approaches and learning from pilot projects, which allows for a degree of 'error' and changes the methods of measure and control in policy. However, Cairny (2012) also states that the translation of complexity theories to policy studies is incomplete.

Although it seems that policy studies have more recently began to engage with complexity concepts, Klijn (2008) argues that two different dominant views have emerged. New public management aims to reduce the complexity of policy processes by separating responsibility and authority with regards to actual policy making and implementation, political decisions, and their realisation. Governance, on the other hand, aims to improve inter-organisational co-ordination to improve policy proposals, implementation, and actor

participation. Klijn argues that governance approaches thus generally step into the complexity of challenges to design context-specific policy mechanisms (2008).

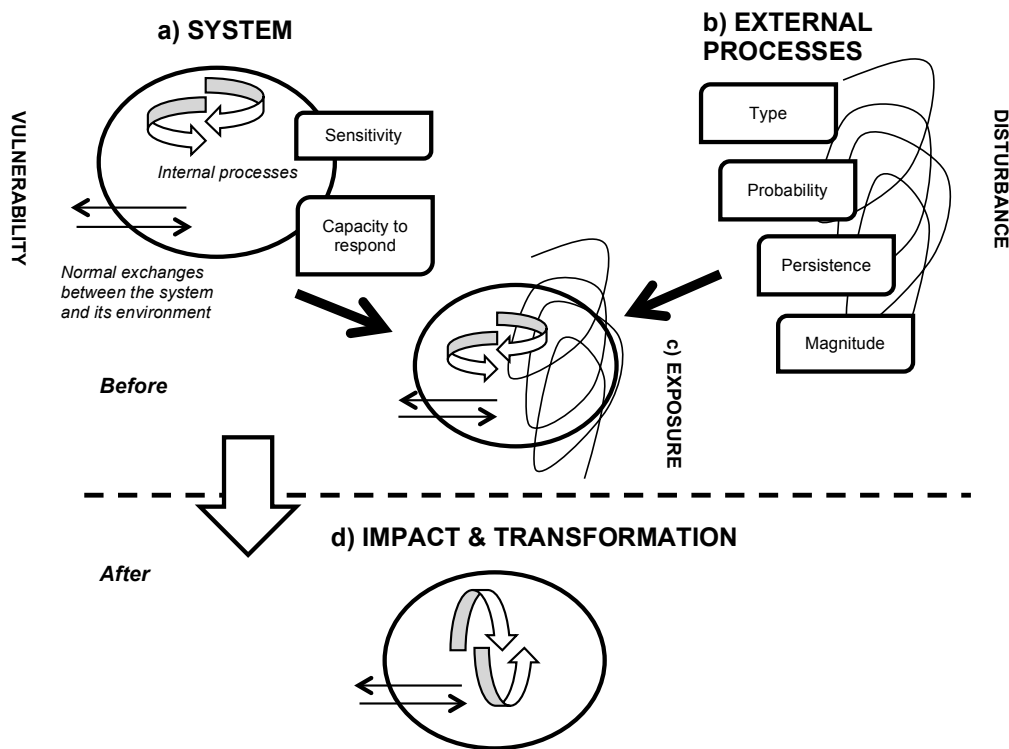
Dombkins (2014) provides four characteristics of policies suitable to complex systems. It is not to say that the VAC inspires such policies, yet they would be most ideal to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa. Such policies are emergent, which means they cannot be predicted or broken down into smaller elements. Their formulation and implementation are intrinsically linked. One could thus argue that the research and policy processes are not separate, but overlap. During implementation the potential policy outcomes may change completely, but can be adapted as they materialise. Learning thus plays an essential role. These policies are constantly monitored and adapted to stay relevant to the system. Complex policy processes involve multiple actors that cannot be controlled by the body that owns the policy. As mentioned before, efforts to reduce vulnerability, and increase resilience and adaptive capacity may be compromised if attempted at larger scales (Adger et al. 2011). However, there will always be “trade-offs between policy objectives focussed on sufficient and effective adaptation, narrowly defined, and those strategies which seek to retain resilience by investing in underlying capacity to adapt...to stresses that affect socio-ecological systems” (Adger et al. 2011:765).

Gallopín (2007) offers insight into strategic policy entry points to addressing vulnerability. These policy entry points are illustrated in Figure 7: a) Working on the system through capacity-building activities; b) Working on external processes through prevention and mitigation activities; c) Intervening during the exposure stage through shielding activities; and d) Responding after the exposure, through adaptation, restoration or compensation activities. To be most effective in meeting its mandate, the VAC system should diversify efforts and focus on all four entry points, yet as the findings presented in Chapter Eight demonstrate, the VAC tends to focus mainly on shielding activities and post-exposure compensation responses in the form of humanitarian responses such as food aid and cash transfers.

1.4.5 The use of research in policy processes

As this research focuses on the transfer of research to policy processes, it is necessary to explain how this process is understood within the context of this research. Holmes, Bammer, Young, Saxl and Stewart argue that the concept of evidence-based policy is straightforward, yet the practice of evidence-based policy making “has rarely lived up to expectations and remains controversial” (2010:149). As Court and Young (2006) explain, policy makers who complain that researchers do not produce timely evidence, researchers who cannot understand the resistance to policy change despite the evidence they produce, and practitioners who ‘just get on with it’, all seem to operate parallel to each other without engaging. There are a number of challenges with evidence-based policy making (see Gregrich 2003; Rosenstock 2002; Lackey 2006; Hoppe 1999 – all referenced by Holmes et al. 2010), such as research being used to support already-made policy decisions, or manipulated to support political agendas that influence the policy process, which is an issue addressed in Chapters Six and Seven. Nevertheless, this research builds on the idea that “...decisions based on a good understanding of how the relevant natural and social aspects of ... systems work are more likely to lead to successful outcomes than those which are not” (Holmes et al. 2010:149).

Figure 7: Policy entry points to addressing vulnerability in SESs



Source: Adapted from Gallopín (2006, 2007)

Research, however, is not the only way to gain such understandings. Other sources include the actual process of implementing programmes, citizen participation during policy processes, and integrated, multiple, interdisciplinary sources that can accommodate the dynamics of complex policy issues (Jones 2009). According to Nutley et al. (2007; 2010) one way to relate research, evidence and knowledge, is to see research as one form of evidence, and evidence as on one form of knowledge. As research is merely one way of gaining system understanding, the term 'research-informed policy' (Holmes et al. 2010) rather than 'research-based policy', is applied in this thesis. When referring to the processes of transferring research to policy processes in this thesis, the reader should assume research-informed policy processes.

Nutley et al. (2010), Best and Holmes (2010), and Brown (2012) all refer to three generations of research-to-action thinking. The first concerns linear models, which existed between 1960–90. The application of research in such models could be seen as 'knowledge transfer/dissemination', as research is typically handed over to others for usage. The packaging of research is important in such models, as it influences whether the research gets used. The second set of models lasted between 1990–today, and is labelled as relationship models. These models assume that the key process for improving research application is to improve the relationships between research producers and users in networks. The application of research in such models could be seen as 'knowledge exchange' and communication is key.

More recently a third set of models has emerged related to complexity theories and labelled as systems models. These models assume that the way research is embedded within organisations or then systems, determines how it will get used. Research in systems models are typically embedded within relationships,

priorities, cultures and contexts. The application of research is considered a dynamic process within SESs. The application of research in such models could be seen as 'knowledge integration/translation/mobilisation'. Best and Holmes (2010) and Cherney and Head (2011) offer greater focus specifically on systems models.

Court and Young (2006) also argue that research about the research-policy transfer should not be about how to transfer research, but why some ideas in policy and research networks are picked up, and others not. They offer the RAPID framework, which categorises related reasons into the political context, evidence, policy and research network links, and the external context (Court & Young 2006). Political factors that influence research-policy (process) transfer include the extent of civil and political freedom in a country; political disagreements, institutional pressures, and vested interests; and attitudes, incentives, room for manoeuvre, local history, and power relations. With regards to evidence, Court and Young (2006) argue that its quality, relevance, usefulness to solving problems, packaging and communication strategies are key. Within networks of policy and research agents, they argue that trust, legitimacy and openness are key factors, and also stress the importance of having translators to tend to communication. Finally, with regards to influences from the external environment, they note that donors' actions including international policies, processes, and research-funding instruments influence research-policy transfer on national level. They question the relevance of development research done in the northern hemisphere and then applied in the southern hemisphere. The issues they have around this application include questions around beneficiary access, ownership, priorities, the use of outsider consultants, and the perceived legitimacy of processes and outcomes by local policy makers (Court & Young 2006). Although the RAPID framework could have been applied to answer the research question, the PAA was chosen instead as it incorporates concepts from a number of different frameworks, which accommodate the RAPID categories.

It is also important to note some of the uses of research in policy processes. Nutley et al. (2007) identifies a number of uses. Firstly they discuss the obvious direct use of research: At macro level it is used to develop and choose between policy options; local policy makers directly apply research to determine local priorities or strategic directions; and practitioners use it to identify the best courses of action. These scenarios represent the ideal use of research for policy processes as reflected in linear models discussed above; however, there are also more indirect and subtle uses. "Research can alter knowledge and understanding, and the use of research may be as much about shaping attitudes and ways of thinking as having a direct influence on decision making" (Nutley et al. 2007:34). It can also be applied to support a specific political standpoint, or undermine an opponent's, as it influences social institutions and discourses. These uses of research in policy processes relate to the relationship and system models discussed above.

Court and Young (2003) reviewed 50 case studies in a developing country context and found that research did influence policy development and implementation in a variety of ways. Although some cases reported ways in which research had a direct influence on policy, in most cases the impact was indirect and took much longer. In these incidents concerted advocacy efforts were also necessary (Court & Young 2003). Policy changes ranged from clear changes in the actual policies to changes in implementation, whilst some instances demonstrated how action research caused substantial changes on the ground without affecting policy. Court and Young (2003) also report that research influenced the general discourses within which

policies are made. They thus argue that it is as important to change how things are done, than it is to change what is done (Court and Young 2003). Research of research-policy transfer should thus go beyond the impact on policy documents and visual practices to include policy capacity and timeframes.

Another concept useful to this research is that of boundary management. According to Cash, Clark, Alcock, Dickson, Eckley, Guston, Jäger and Mitchell (2003:8086) the effective mobilisations of research for effective policies requires the management of "...boundaries between knowledge⁷ and action in ways that simultaneously enhance the salience, credibility, and legitimacy of the information they produce... [as well as the application of] a variety of institutional mechanisms that facilitate communication, translation and mediation across boundaries." 'Salience' refers to the relevance of research; 'credibility' refers to the scientific validity of research; and 'legitimacy' refers to whether or not stakeholders were involved in the research process (Cash et al. 2003). Cash et al. (2003) calls the use of these collective activities "boundary management". Adger et al. (2011:759) draw on Folke et al. to state that actors fulfilling the role of "...knowledge carriers, stewards, innovators, [and] leaders [are]...essential in mobilizing adaptive capacity...[In addition,] the role of emergent bridging organizations of multilevel institutions [are] central in the context."

Boundary management works from the premise that a boundary exists between science and practice (non-science), yet that these two elements are mutually dependent. Lamont and Molnár (2002) explain that the boundary between science and non-science was created with the establishment of science as a discipline. It was an attempt by scientists to gain credibility for their work by distinguishing themselves from amateurs (Star & Griesemer 1989). Gieryn (1983) also calls efforts to discern science from non-science "boundary work". Examples include the establishment of advanced degrees as credentials, as well as the development of specialised academic journals in order to eschew eclectic public interest in science (Star & Griesemer 1989).

Although boundaries were set up as a separation between science and non-science, Star and Griesemer (1989) argue that boundaries can also be a platform for communication between these two worlds, which relates to the negotiation of boundaries explored in complexity theory. Through the creation and use of boundary objects as object of passage between worlds, boundaries can enable communication. Boundary objects are:

...both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use. These objects may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable [sic], a means of translation. The creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds.

(Star & Griesemer 1989:393)

⁷ 'Research' and 'knowledge' are used interchangeably in this thesis, although I acknowledge that research is only one form of knowledge.

Boundary objects usually emerge from a situation where different participants have a common goal towards which they've agreed to work. Developing boundary objects is sufficient for their own purposes, or required in a longer process to eventually fulfil their purpose (Star & Griesemer 1989). Different kinds of boundary objects include repositories of knowledge (resources from the same pile, such as a library used by people from different worlds), ideal types (vague objects adaptable to local sites, for example diagrams), coincident boundaries (objects with the same boundaries yet different perspectives on the interior of the boundary, such as biological maps versus political maps of a country) and standardised forms (objects with unchanging information used in different worlds, for example a standard form) (Star & Griesemer 1989).

By collaboratively developing boundary objects, scientists and practitioners (or policy makers in the context of this research), are able to develop salient, credible, and legitimate information that is mutually useful for their respective purposes. Unlike science, this information draws its stability from accountability and responsiveness to opposing external authorities, not in isolation. The information is "suspended by the coproduction of mutual interests" (Guston 2001:406). Institutional mechanisms supporting boundary management are geared towards communication, translation and mediation across the research-policy boundary.

1.4.6 Justifying an institutional approach to the research

With complexity as an underlying theory, a consideration of policy process research is required to identify an applicable research framework that could identify the blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policies aiming to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa. Nowlin (2011) divides policy scholarship between knowledge *in* policy processes that happens through analysis and evaluation of concerned contexts to inform policy, and knowledge *of* policy processes that focuses on the how and why of policy processes. This research requires a framework to gain knowledge *of* policy processes within southern Africa. Although the SES framework is useful for conceptualising policy as a feedback loop within a complex SES, it does not provide the means to specifically study policy dynamics in detail (Anderies & Janssen 2013). The need for Figure 6 to explain the institutional dynamics within the governing subsystem also demonstrates this shortcoming in the SES.

Harold Laswell (1951) started research work on the policy cycle, or "stages heuristic" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1994), by operationalising ideas about improving governing through improved quality information provided to government. His focus was mainly on the policy process, the stages a policy goes through during its existence: agenda-setting and problem-defining; decision-making; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation. The policy cycle model has been criticised for oversimplifying policy making as a rational problem-solving process (rational, because knowledge is supposed to provide the ultimate base for policy) with clear progressive sequential parts and for lacking causal mechanisms (Sabatier 2007; Nowlin 2011). Laswell's model directed an entire generation of policy scholars to investigate one policy stage at a time (Sabatier 2007). Although criticised for neglecting the entirety of the policy process and political interaction, his model was foundational and led to other researchers branching out into studies of political behaviour, unexpected policy changes, social constructions/institutions, power, and inequalities.

Since Laswell (1951), a myriad of policy research frameworks have emerged to cater for the complexities of the policy process. I don't offer a thorough literature review of these frameworks, as this has been done elsewhere (Leroy & Arts 2006; Klijn 2008; Jones 2009; Nowlin 2011; Petridou 2014). Instead, I consider a number of categories or overarching approaches that organise these different policy research frameworks. Crabbé and Leroy (2008) and Jones (2009) each offer three categories; two of which overlap. Crabbé and Leroy (2008) discuss the policy process in general, whilst Jones specifically describes research-based policy processes. Dombkins (2014) and Jones (2009) provide a more recent approach to policy research. There are thus five categories considered here: 1) Policy as a rational synoptic process, 2) Policy as an opportunity, 3) Policy as political interaction, 4) Policy as emergence, and 5) Policy as an institutional phenomenon. See a summary of these categories and their descriptions in Table 1. Some examples of relevant frameworks are also given where relevant.

Understanding these different viewpoints on the study of policy is necessary to determine the particular perspective one would need to take to address a specific policy issue in question. It is important to note how some categories transcend yet include aspects of the previous category. Policy as an opportunity still assumes that research-based policy is good. Policy as political interaction also accommodates research-informed policy, but builds on the understanding that the policy process is not rational. Policy seen as emergence could be applicable to three categories: policy as opportunity, political interaction and institutional phenomenon. It merely requires defining the system from which these policies emerged as complex. Policy as an institutional phenomenon acknowledges all the viewpoints, but takes a step back to consider how this understanding of policy processes came to be and how it influences policy making.

Table 1: Categories of policy research frameworks

Category	Description	Authors
1) Policy as a rational synoptic process (e.g. Laswell's policy cycle, evidence-based policy processes)	Policy processes are reiterating control loops that solve specific problems. Decision makers behave rationally to make optimum decisions by choosing the option with greatest expected utility. Inspired largely by neo-classical economic and engineering thought.	Crabbé & Leroy (2008) Jones (2009)
2) Policy as an opportunity (e.g. innovation systems, practice-centred approaches and sustainability science)	Sceptical of rationality of the policy process, recognising that it involves pragmatic decisions by actors based on multiple factors in face of uncertainty. Still assumes research-based policy is good.	Jones (2009)
3) Policy as political interaction (e.g. Sabatier's Advocacy Coalition Framework, policy studied as a discourse)	Policy is a product of power relations between different actors, groups, beliefs and interests. Power relations infuse entire research process and policy uptake to reflect and maintain power structures through competition, negotiation, legitimisation and marginalisation. Inspired by political sciences and political economy.	Crabbé & Leroy (2008) Jones (2009)
4) Policy as emergence or complex policy (WAVE Planning and the Robustness Framework)	Policy is seen as either an emergent property of a complex system or a complex adaptive system in itself. In either case, it is an on going process between design and delivery. The policy is thus constantly redesigned and the policy owner does not have direct control of the process.	Dombkins (2014)
5) Policy as an institutional phenomenon (e.g. the PAA)	Policy processes have been institutionalised and this institutionalisation affects policy making. Context of the policy process as the starting point of the policy analysis, not the actual policy or only power relations.	Crabbé & Leroy (2008)

As the VAC is a multi-agency organisation, there are a large number of differing and sometimes conflicting

mandates that need to be met on the way to the VAC's ultimate outcome of reducing regional vulnerability. More than just utility determines decisions, and so the first category, policy as rational goal-oriented process, is not applicable. Nor is the second, because it ignores the role of power within the policy process and this research, which focuses on institutional blockages and catalysts in the process of research-policy transfer, is also interested in the power dynamics that influence policy processes. This research could have been approached using a framework from the third category, policy as political interaction, yet the VAC emerged from a complex context, and the fourth category offers the opportunity to explore the policy process as either emergent property or a complex adaptive system in itself. Addressing vulnerability within complex SESs through policy requires policies that are able to adapt to complex changes. This fourth policy framework category is therefore applicable to this research yet the final category, policy as an institutional phenomenon, is even more applicable; it accommodates policy as emerging from its context, whilst also maintaining a focus on power dynamics. The research question also lends itself to an institutional approach, as identifying blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in policy processes requires an investigation of institutional dynamics.

1.5 An analytical framework to understand the knowledge-policy arrangement: The Policy Arrangement Approach

An institutional approach to this research is thus useful to identify the catalysts for and blockages to the uptake of vulnerability information. One such institutional framework is the PAA. If complexity theory is the underlying theory to this research, which aims to develop a model of catalysts for and blockages to the uptake of vulnerability information in vulnerability-reducing policies, then the PAA is the analytical framework. Many other frameworks (see 2.5) could have been used to answer the research question, but the PAA is unique, as it offers four analytical perspectives on the same policy arrangement, using different research questions and methodologies.

Here I only offer a brief introduction to the PAA framework, which is justified and discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The PAA aims to “analytically link changes in day-to-day policy practices to broader, structural changes in contemporary society” (Lieberink 2006:45), making it particularly suited to the VAC case study, as the VAC is a manifestation of contextual changes in southern Africa. These links are conceptualised as feedback loops and discussed in Chapter Four.

A policy arrangement refers to the way in which the content and organisation of a particular policy area stabilise temporarily in a specific time and place. Policy arrangements ideally include and lead to policies, which in turn aim for the continuity or change of practices (Crewe & Young 2002). It is also possible to frame the VAC system as a knowledge arrangement, as it monitors and provides vulnerability information. Nevertheless, because of the aim of this research and the VAC's documented mandate to inform policies that aim to reduce regional vulnerability, the framework for this research takes a policy perspective. The PAA offers four integrated dimensions for a more comprehensive and dynamic analysis of policy processes as an institutional phenomenon: actors and coalitions; power and resources; rules of the game; and discourses (Lieberink 2006). The first three refer to the organisation of the policy arrangement, and the latter to its content. These dimensions are discussed theoretically in Chapter Two and in great detail in each of the

corresponding Chapters Five to Seven.

Although the PAA is a useful framework, it is not a rigid one; it is meant to guide the enquiry, not stifle it. An analysis can start from any dimension, but different starting points will result in different perspectives—the starting point should be determined by the research question (Liefferink 2006). Considering the research question for this thesis, *What are the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policies that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?* the PAA rules dimension may be most appropriate. However, asking the same question from all four angles would produce additional insights. The question is thus considered from all four angles.

1.6 Scientific contribution

As mentioned before, Nowlin (2011) divides policy scholarship between knowledge *in* policy processes that happens through analysis and evaluation of concerned contexts to inform policy, and knowledge *of* policy processes that focuses on the how and why of policy processes. Once again the notion of negotiable boundaries is relevant, as uncertainty requires researchers and policy makers to travel between knowledge in and of policy processes. Although this work was primarily concerned with knowledge of policy processes, it also provides some insights to the former, due to the VAC case study. The contributions are useful for policy researchers that focus on the knowledge of policy processes, but also provide insight to policy makers that are interested in knowledge application in policy processes in southern Africa. The scientific contributions of this study include:

- 1) Insights into the multi-level and institutional complexities of policy aspects in responses required to food security and vulnerability in southern Africa;
- 2) A number of social sciences contributions linked to the application of the PAA:
 - a. Lessons learned from the application of the PAA in a new policy field – development policy – and its application in a developing country context. Researchers have thus far predominantly applied the PAA to the field of environmental policy (Wiering & Arts 2007; Bogaert, Cliquet & Maes 2009; Van Hoof & Van Tatenhove 2009; Veenman, Liefferink & Arts 2009; Beeko & Arts 2010; Van Gossum, Arts, De Wulf & Verheyen 2011; Niedziałkowski, Paavola & Drzejewska 2011, Arnouts, Van der Zouwen & Arts 2012; Ayana, Arts & Wiersum 2013; Larrue, Hegger & Trémorin 2013; Seijger, De Wulf, Otter & Van Tatenhove 2013; Stassen, Smolders & Leroy 2013), yet its developers have always declared that it could be applied to other policy fields as well (Leroy & Arts 2006). PAA applications have also been concentrated in developed country contexts, although there have been some applications in the field of environmental policy in developing country contexts (Beeko & Arts 2010; Ayana, Arts & Wiersum 2013).
 - b. The linkages between the PAA, complexity theory and Ostrom's SES framework. The SES framework offers a valuable way of conceptualising governing within complex SESs, whilst the PAA offers a way to specifically study policy arrangements in governing systems. Part of this contribution is the layering of frameworks, as the concept of feedback loops between policy arrangements and the context in which they operate, is borrowed from the SES.

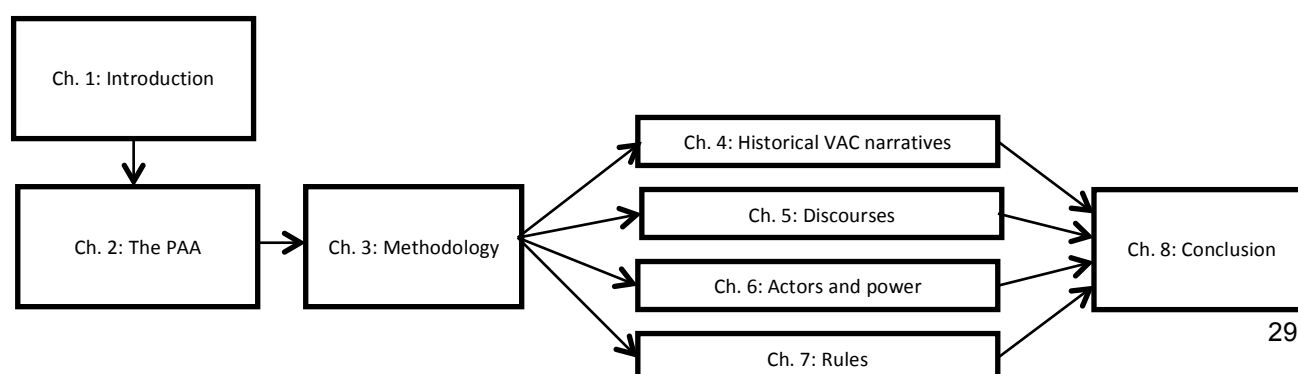
- 3) The consideration of the role of ICPs in shaping the development policy discourse, especially because their discourses may not have originated from the actual context in which they operate. This work also offers insight into the mismatch of governance approaches by ICPs and sectoral approaches employed by governments in southern Africa.
- 4) A contribution of empirical evidence towards a relatively novel body of knowledge about the efficacy and challenges of governance in developing country contexts. Most literature on governing shifts calls for evidence of the implications of shifting to governance (see Chapter Two).
- 5) A contribution of empirical evidence towards an understanding of the application of research in policy processes in southern Africa.

1.7 The thesis structure

This study is divided into eight chapters and organised to answer the research question as illustrated in Figure 8. The first chapter introduces the aim and motivation of the study, as well as the case study, underlying theory, and analytical framework. It also gives an overview of the scientific contribution of the study and the structure of the thesis. Chapter Two discusses the founding principles of the PAA and the ways in which it applies to the case study. The third chapter gives a thorough account of the qualitative research methodology, design, and methods applied during the research process, as well as the limitations of the study. Chapter Four is dedicated to the external factors that contributed to the emergence of the VAC policy arrangement. The links between the context and evolutions within the VAC policy arrangement are also explored. Chapters Five to Seven cover the findings to asking the research question from the different dimensions of the PAA: Chapter Five from a discourses angle, Chapter Six from an actor, coalition, power and resources angle, and Chapter Seven from a rules perspective. Note that the actor and coalitions dimension is merged with the power and resources dimension, as these dimensions are closely related and conveniently discussed together. Chapter Eight draws together the findings from the different dimensions to formulate a comprehensive answer to the research question.

In each chapter, literature, data analysis and key findings relevant to that specific dimension are presented. The analysis and findings will therefore not be organised together in conventional chapters, but divided into chapters relating to the PAA dimensions, each containing the analysis and findings from a specific PAA dimension. The literature review is also distributed across the thesis, with Chapters One to Four containing the outcomes of the two most significant reviews – one theoretical and the other empirical. The overarching question is answered in the final chapter, drawing together key insights from the previous chapters. Chapter Eight also contains recommendations and further research suggestions.

Figure 8: Structure of the thesis



1.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the overarching research aim, which is to identify and explore the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in policy processes in southern Africa. The research is motivated by the postulated disconnect between relevant research outputs and their application in vulnerability-reducing policies, as well as continued vulnerability in southern Africa. A summary of the VAC history was given to contextualise the research aim and the research question: *What are the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policy processes that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?*

Complexity theory was introduced as the underlying theory to the research domain. Vulnerability—understood as all encompassing, or specifically applied to food insecurity—is a complex phenomenon that cannot be addressed with linear approaches. Southern Africa was conceptualised as a complex SES with a number of subsystems, including a governing subsystem. The VAC forms part of the governing subsystem as an information unit, providing vulnerability information to governing bodies such as the SADC, governments that form part of the SADC, ICPs, and NGOs. The VAC draws vulnerability information from the SES to present to these governing bodies. They then choose whether and how to apply the information to address vulnerability in the SES. The VAC could thus also have been conceptualised as a knowledge arrangement, but due to its mandate and the aim of this study, it is conceptualised as a policy arrangement. An overview of policies most suited to complex SESs and key entry points for such policies were presented. This chapter also clarified that when referring to the transfer of research to policy processes, the reader should assume research-informed rather than research-based policy, as research is only one way of informing and better contextualising policies. Boundary management is also useful to this research as it speaks to key issues in the transfer of research to policy including that the salience, credibility and legitimacy of research should be maintained, whilst being applied in policy processes. Boundary objects are the tools through which to communicate between research and policy. Although a useful way to conceptualise the VAC within the complex southern African system, the SES framework does not provide the means to study the governing subsystem, policy processes, and the role of information in these processes.

Five categories of research frameworks were presented before arguing for an institutional approach to the policy research, which also accommodates the idea of emerging policies. The PAA was briefly introduced as one example of an institutional policy research framework, and its suitability for this study was motivated. The last content section in this chapter outlined the scientific contribution of this work. In the next chapter, I discuss the grounding principles of the PAA and its four dimensions.

Chapter Two: The Policy Arrangement Approach

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I justified an institutional approach to the research and introduced the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) as an appropriate policy research framework to answer the research question: *What are the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policy processes that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?* Included in this chapter are discussions of the founding principles of the PAA: institutions, political modernisation, and policy arrangements. A better grasp of these principles applied to examples from the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) case study and supported by complexity theory, further support the application of the PAA to this research. As part of political modernisation, this chapter introduces the government-governance continuum and its application to the southern African governing subsystem. This continuum conceptualises the complex governing subsystem of which the VAC forms part, which (as explored in Chapter Four) emerged out of the southern African context to deal with the complexity and uncertainty of regional vulnerability challenges. The government-governance continuum is also applied in Chapters Four to Seven. This chapter also draws on the concept of limited statehood. Each separate PAA dimension is discussed in more detail in each of the following and corresponding chapters, and so only a brief overview of the dimensions is given in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of some other frameworks that could also have been applied to this research.

2.2 Institutions

In the context of this thesis it is important to distinguish between the terms 'institution' and 'organisation':

Institutions are the constraints that shape social behaviour: the rules of the game (North, 1990) that provide common ground for the negotiation and performance of power and influence in relationships between individuals and groups...Organisations are collectives that have agency, part of which is directed towards the maintenance and renegotiation of institutions. Institutions shape the operation of organisational agency and its emergence from the interaction of individual agency.

(Pelling et al. 2008:5)

According to Leroy and Arts (2006), and in agreement with Pelling et al. (2008), an institution is a phenomenon where actors' behaviour is set in certain structures and patterns, which in turn determine actors' behaviour. Consequently meanings are also solidified into behavioural rules and organisational structures, which in turn reproduce these very meanings (Leroy & Arts 2006).

In the context of development policy:

...different people and groups - in different settings, at different scales, with different perspectives and priorities - will experience and value actual and possible pathways of change in very different ways. They may frame and define the character of ...systems, and what is positive or negative about them, in very different ways. What is to be sustained, for whom and who, over what time and spatial scale, and thus can be contested, often strongly.

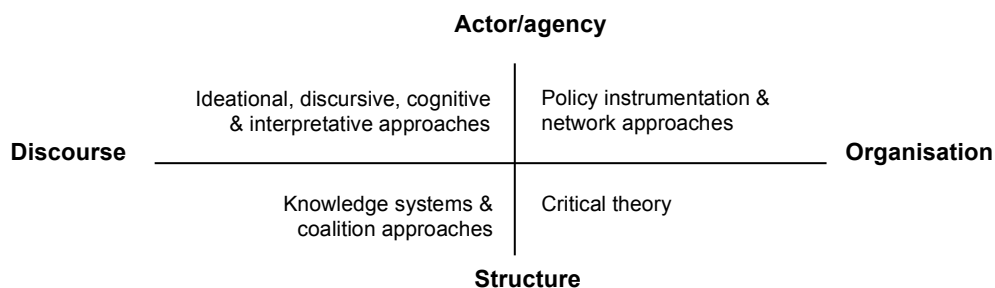
(Leach et al. 2007:1)

To answer the research question, it is imperative to understand how such differences can be solidified into institutional rules in a policy arrangement that in turn will produce blockages to and catalysts for the use of vulnerability information in policy processes aiming to reduce vulnerability. Institutions mark the solidified

crossroads between the actor-structure on the one hand, and the discourse-organisation dualities on the other (Leroy & Arts 2006). After discussing the “sometimes furious academic debates” (Leroy & Arts 2006:8) these dualities have inspired, Leroy and Arts (2006) acknowledge that they might be oversimplifying the matter, but nevertheless present these dualities as extreme points on two continua (see Figure 9). The point where the two continua cross represents where institutions are formed.

Leroy and Arts (2006) use this presentation in Figure 9 to classify a number of paradigms and approaches in the social sciences, and environmental policy analysis in particular, placing these approaches into one of the four quadrants between “intentionalist” (agency), “structuralist” (structure), “ideational” (discourse), and “organisational” (organisational) extremes. They claim not to bridge all of these approaches with the PAA, but instead to build on them, drawing out what is useful and avoiding one-sided approaches that do not do justice to complex social realities (Leroy & Arts 2006). The PAA works from the point of convergence in Figure 9, drawing on all the other perspectives to explain institutional dynamics within policy arrangements.

Figure 9: Crossing dualities in social sciences



Source: Adapted from Leroy & Arts (2006:8)

The question now is: How do institutions relate to the idea of complex Socio-ecological Systems (SESs)? As discussed in the previous chapter, the behaviour of complex systems is always emergent, resulting from the interaction between elements in the system. In trying to better understand complex systems, we tend to look for rules or the patterns in system behaviour. According to Cilliers (2000), using rule-based models can help us to describe systems and perhaps how they are supposed to behave; yet rule-based models have certain limitations. He warns that it is crucial to remember that these rules only make sense within the framework of the phenomenon we're trying to understand, and that this framework is not naturally given, but generated by our description of the phenomenon. These rules can sometimes very clearly describe a system, so much so that we tend to declare them as 'true', whereas the system, due to its complex nature, has a large number of dynamic, non-linear interactions, which lead to unpredictable emerging outcomes (Cilliers 2000). A model of a complex system will thus always be a limited representation, unable to fully describe the system (Cilliers 2000), and its identified rules will only make sense within the model.

Nevertheless, Cilliers (2000) argues rules are useful for engaging with complex systems. The institutions in a SES are the rules determining behaviour. These institutions are emerging properties of the SES, produced through the interaction of individual actors, which then become the rules that continue to guide actor and collective behaviour that contribute to further emerging properties. Applied to the VAC system, institutions would thus be the rules by which the actors in the VAC system interact with each other to produce the

emergent properties of the VAC system. These rules were solidified through formal processes or mutual informal agreements between actors. This research is specifically interested in the way actors behave with regards to policy. Applied to policies, institutionalisation would thus mean:

...the gradual stabilisation of definitions, problems and approaches, of strategies and solutions in and around specific policy domains...the more or less fixed patterns of divisions of tasks and interactions that develop between the actors involved, to the stabilisation of more or less fixed rules of the game...

(Leroy & Arts 2006:10)

Chapter Seven is dedicated to discussing the key institutional rules that have set in the VAC and how they influence the use of vulnerability information in policy processes. As one of the founding principles of the PAA, institutional rules also form one of its four dimensions (see 2.4).

2.3 Political modernisation (and the government-governance continuum)

Arts and Leroy (2006) state that technological, economic, societal, political, and epistemological developments across the globe have caused a new modernistic turn, which has an impact on the very changes that have caused it. They write that this turn is conceptualised by scholars using terms such as “globalisation”, “dematerialisation”, and “scientific uncertainty” about complex new challenges. Complex environmental challenges and the problems they cause are often presented as the perfect example of this new modernistic turn (Arts & Leroy 2006). Although it is impossible to cover all the emerging discourses relating to modernisation in this chapter, it is nevertheless important to consider it as the backdrop to the governing shift from government to governance, or as some call it, from national governance to multi-level governance. It is important to point out that modernisation is an emergent property of complex SESs, and that government-governance changes specifically relate to their governing subsystems.

Arts and Leroy (2006) write about recent shifts in governing modes on national level. Agreeing with Hysing (2009), Leach et al. (2007), Sørensen (2006) and Hertin et al. (2004), they explain governance as follows: “...steering no longer is the privilege of governmental agencies, but is *de facto* (and in many cases *de jure*) the common responsibility of a variety of agencies, representing governmental bodies, market agencies and civil society organisations” (Leroy & Arts 2006:12). Leach et al. (2007) quote Richards and Smith (2002), offering a very broad, yet useful definition of governance:

Governance is a descriptive label that is used to highlight the changing nature of the policy process in recent decades. In particular, it sensitizes us to the ever-increasing variety of terrains and actors involved in the making of public policy. Thus, governance demands that we consider all the actors and locations beyond the [central government] ‘core executive’ involved in the policy making process.

(in Leach et al. 2007:8)

This definition also relates to the idea that governments do not necessarily control policies, although they may own them.

Following the work of Renate Mayntz, Borzel and Risse offer another useful definition for governance. Although not specifically mentioning policy processes, the definition refers to what policies are intended to do: “...we define governance as the various institutionalized modes of social coordination to produce and

implement collectively binding rules, or to provide collective goods” (2010:114).

Hysing (2009) writes that because governing challenges have become too diverse, dynamic, and complex, the state is now considered unable to define and implement collective action or impose its will on society. Governing formats have consequently begun to shift away from hierarchies of national political institutions (government) to multi-actor governing modes in which public and private actors from different policy levels govern society through networks and soft policy instruments (governance) (Sørensen 2006). Borzel and Risse (2010:115) define ‘hierarchical coordination’ as “...authoritative decisions with claims to legitimacy (e.g. laws, administrative ordinances, court decisions...)”. They further explain that such hierarchies are based on “...institutionalised relationships of domination and subordination, which significantly constrains the autonomy of subordinate actors (Borzel & Risse 2010:115). On the other hand, Hertin et al. (2004) define soft policy instruments as new steering and coordinating mechanisms that aim to reach their objectives in ways other than hierarchical legally binding rules and standards enforced by public authorities. Instruments are instead self-regulatory, co-regulatory, or voluntary (Hertin et al. 2004). Soft policy instruments relate to Borzel and Risse’s idea of non-hierarchical coordination, which they define as “...based on voluntary commitment and compliance” (2010:115). They argue that arguments are resolved through negotiation during non-hierarchical coordination including compromise, bargaining, and arguing to reach new common interests and preferences (Borzel & Risse 2010).

Some write that governance might provide more steering capacity than its government predecessor, which may be because the intention of bringing non-state actors to participate in policy making was to improve the quality of policy and the effectiveness of implementation (Borzel & Risse 2010). Leroy and Arts (2006) are sceptical of uncritical praise, saying only empirical evidence will tell if governance represents greater legitimacy, responsibility, and problem-solving capacity. Adger et al. (2011:762) argue that whatever the governing structure, it will “...have direct implications for the level of flexibility in responding to future change as well as variation in local contexts”. This thesis aims to contribute empirical evidence to a growing body of literature, of the legitimacy, responsibility and problem-solving capacity of governance in a developing country context, specifically related to complex challenges. The question thus is whether governance could lead to greater level of flexibility in responding to future challenges?

Hysing (2009) argues that the government-to-governance storyline is often oversimplified, and that it needs further investigation. He explains that there are two schools of thought. One school argues that the state’s role is shrinking as power is handed up to international bodies, down to local actors, and out to agencies and the private sector (Rhodes 1997, 2007). Hysing calls this governing without government. The other school argues that the state’s role is simply changing from having all the constitutional power to becoming a facilitator and cooperative partner in governing (Pierre & Peters 2000, 2005; Lundqvist 2001; Sørensen 2006). Borzel and Risse agree (2010) by arguing that non-hierarchical structures are often embedded within hierarchical structures, calling it a ‘shadow of hierarchy’ in which the state explicitly or implicitly threatens to “...to impose binding rules or laws on private actors in order to change their cost-benefit calculations in favor of a voluntary agreement closer to the common good rather than to particularistic self-interest” (Borzel & Risse 2010:116).

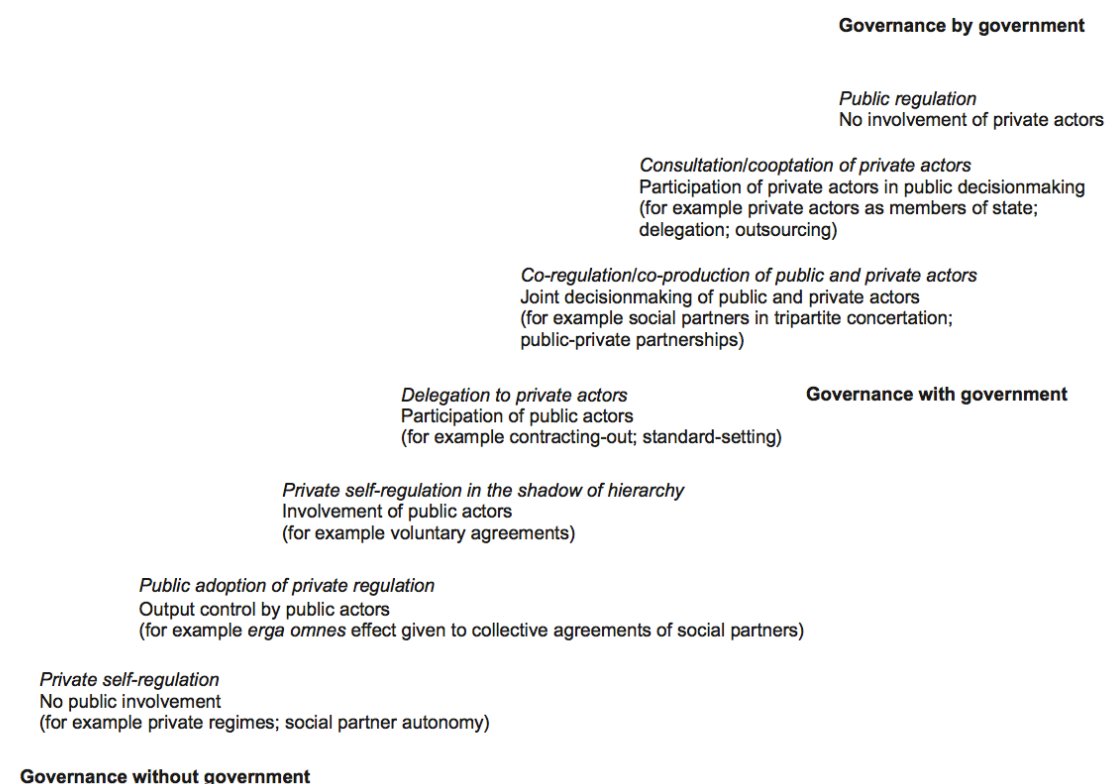
In order to navigate through the subtleties of the government to governance shift, Hysing (2009) offers three dimensions to consider: governing instruments and styles, public-private relationships, and policy levels. He also presents characteristics of each as they shift on the government-governance continuum (see Table 2). Borzel and Risse (2010) offer a similar visualisation of governing by, with and without a government (see Figure 10).

Table 2: Governing modes on the government to governance continuum

Dimensions	Government ←-----→ Governance				
Governing instruments and styles	Command and control (legal sanctions)	Incentive-based instruments (taxes and grants)	Delegated public functions	Information instruments ⁸	Voluntary instruments (agreements and labelling)
Public-private relationships	Hierarchic relationship	Institutionalised public-private relations (state domination)	Facilitation and enabling of networks	Mutual dependency of networks between private and public actors	Private self-governing
Policy levels	National state governing	Delegation of authority and responsibility to other levels	Gatekeeping (governing in implementation)	Multilevel governance (circumventing the national level)	Governing by a global civil society

Source: Adapted from Hysing (2009:650)

Figure 10: Governance by, with and without government



Source: Borzel and Risse (2010)

⁸ Governing instruments such as information and voluntary instruments represent the soft policy tools discussed by Sørensen (2006) and Hertin et al. (2004).

Considering Hysing's table of the government-governance continuum, and Borzel and Risse's figure of governing by, with and without government, it becomes clear that governing modes are more complex and multidimensional than a simple government-to-governance storyline. Leach et al. (2007) also write about this shift, and specifically relate it to parallel debates in developing country contexts. They write about the critique of state-led developments interplayed with the 1990s World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic reform agendas that focused on "rolling back" the state and privatisation of public services. These agendas were also associated with the so-called Washington consensus that promoted neo-liberal development through free competition, trade, and capital movement, which soon enough showed its negative effects on the poor and tendency to increase national and global inequalities (Chomsky 1998; Stiglitz 2002 – both quoted by Leach et al. 2007). These critiques have in turn fed debates about "...the role of the state in the post-neo-liberal development era, including an emphasis on democratic state-citizen relationships and on governmental-non-governmental partnerships in the delivery of services" (Leach et al. 2007:8).

Borzel and Risse (2010) also write about how much state is necessary to make governance work, which is applicable for governance research in developing countries, and especially in contexts where international non-state actors supplement developmental capacity. Coming back to the concept of a 'shadow hierarchy', Borzel and Risse explain that a shadow of the state is important for governing without government, as it generates incentives for co-operation for non-state actors (Borzel & Risse 2010). Even so, they also argue that governance research wrongly assumes that governments are truly problem-orientated and neglects that governments are also trying to remain autonomous and maintain their problem-solving capacity as governing structure (Borzel & Risse 2010). Borzel & Risse (2010) argue that neither weak nor strong states are unable to provide a shadow of hierarchy. A weak state is careful to engage with non-state actors on policy matters, as it fears a loss of autonomy, and a strong state is unlikely to share its authority. States lying somewhere in the middle, providing a medium shadow, are most likely to yield effective governance to solve problems (Borzel & Risse 2010).

Governance in areas of limited statehood thus creates a dilemma. Borzel and Risse (2010:118) explain statehood as "...the ability of the state to enforce collectively binding decisions, ultimately through coercive means, via its monopoly over the means of violence". States do not govern in this way constantly, but at least has the power to carry through decisions for the people within the borders of the country, and has international sovereignty in terms of being a territorial entity with formal juridical independence (Borzel and Risse 2010). Although areas with limited statehood will continue to enjoy international sovereignty, the government will "...lack the ability to implement and enforce rules and decisions [and lack] the legitimate monopoly over the means of violence...or both, at least temporarily" (Borzel and Risse 2010:119). This is true for most countries in the world, however, as no government has full control over its total territory. For this reason, Borzel and Risse (2010) choose to use the term 'areas' rather than 'states'. However, the larger or more the areas of limited statehood within a country, the weaker the state and the shadow of hierarchy (Borzel and Risse 2010). This is when the dilemma emerges. The weaker the state, the greater the need for non-hierarchical coordination, yet the less likely it is to succeed, due to a weak shadow of hierarchy (Borzel

and Risse 2010).

Based on this argument governance without a state should be near impossible, and yet it is a reality in many parts of the developing world. Borzel and Risse (2010) offer examples such as how multi-national companies organise local communities, implement environmental protection standards and provide Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) related services. They thus propose that the link between statehood and the shadow of hierarchy is weaker than assumed in the literature, and that there are functional equivalent structures to the state in areas of limited statehood that enable sustainable non-hierarchical governing, providing a shadow of hierarchy (Borzel and Risse 2010).

Borzel and Risse (2010) divide examples of functional equivalent structures into those relying on the logic of consequence, and those relying on the logic of appropriateness. For the former, they explain that actors will participate in governance for the correct incentives or if they are embedded within institutional structures that constrain them. They offer the example of the automotive industry in South Africa that stepped in to offer its employees, their families and communities HIV/AIDS related education and health services in the absence of a functioning national public health system (Borzel & Risse 2010). The industry's self-interest in human capital thus provided a strong incentive to participate in governance (Borzel & Risse 2010).

Actors participating in governance based on the logic of appropriateness are embedded in normative structures that compel them to 'do the right thing' and follow social rules (Borzel & Risse 2010). The term 'corporate social responsibility' is used to describe new requirements for companies to include environmental and human rights norms into production, management, and general business practices due to pressure of their clients (Borzel & Risse 2010). Consequently, companies such as the clothing brand, Nike, now control and regulate its own supply chain to keep it socially responsible, casting a shadow of hierarchy in areas with limited statehood (Borzel & Risse 2010).

2.3.1 Types of governance

Leach et al. (2007) also discuss four types of governance that have emerged to deal with complex issues: networked governance, adaptive governance, deliberative governance, and reflexive governance. In short, they define these four types of governance as follows: Networked governance recognises that governing consists of multiple networks and interactions between actors beyond the state. This networked view preceded the use of the term 'governance', yet has been framed with governance and specifically networked governance literature in recent years. Leach et al. (2007) argue that networked governance suggests

...approaches to understanding policy processes as non-linear, involving more complex and sometimes unpredictable interactions between networks of actors and diverse political interests. State action and power need not be assumed away, but rather seen as reconfiguring and responding amidst broader networks.

(Leach et al. 2007:13)

This quote also reflects policy processes as complex emerging phenomena. The change in government's role in new governing modes was also an argument made by Hysing (2009).

Adaptive governance is a flexible strategy that deals with the complexities and uncertainties of SESs through learning. Due to its lack of consideration of power, knowledge, and framing, Leach et al. (2007) turn to deliberative and reflexive governance. Although there are many parallels between adaptive, deliberative and reflexive governance, there are also distinct differences. The focus of adaptive governance is on uncertainty, complexity and unintended effects of dynamic systems. Deliberative governance focuses on how communities themselves, embedded within specific contexts, define their problems. It is concerned with the exclusion of power, discursive processes and narratives around policy issues (Leach et al. 2007). Reflexive governance focuses on how the boundaries of governance (who is to govern and what is to be governed) are mutually negotiated. It is thus concerned with contingency, social construction and the framing by power (Leach et al. 2007). With these short descriptions as background, I turn to a table presented by Leach et al. (2007). It includes governing by governments and summarises key descriptions of each type of governance defined above, as well as the differences they have in terms of power and knowledge, and dealing with uncertainty, which is relevant for governing approaches dealing with complex problems in SESs (see Table 3).

2.3.2 The governing mode(s) of the VAC

When considering the governing mode(s) of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) VAC, there are a few things to take into consideration including the members and structures of both the SADC and the VAC. Today the SADC has 15 members in southern Africa and operates as an intergovernmental organisation that works to further political and socio-economic cooperation and integration in the region. These members include Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The region has a population of approximately 277 million people. Although the SADC was originally set up to have (independent) jurisdiction over the southern African region, it never came into full effect. The SADC originally consisted of eight principal bodies, of which all but one made decisions on a consensus basis. The SADC Tribunal was the only body with some authority, yet was disbanded without its rulings ever having any real implications (see Chapter Six). Today the SADC has 26 protocols⁹, which are binding documents that commit members to specified objectives and procedures. Protocols are brought into force only once signed by at least two-thirds of member states. I could only identify two protocols that relate to addressing vulnerability in the region: the Protocol on Health (2008), and the Protocol on Gender and Development (2008). Beyond these documents, the SADC has very little leverage or governing instruments to ensure that member states realise national policies that aim to reduce vulnerability. The SADC's lack of power is further explored in Chapter Six. It's obvious that the SADC structure lies towards the right side of the continuum, towards governance, depending on soft policy instruments such as voluntary agreements.

The VAC, as mentioned earlier, was endorsed by the SADC in 1999 to better understand vulnerability in the region (Vincent & Cull 2009). The objective of the VAC was to monitor and promote coordinated

⁹ See <http://www.sadc.int/about-sadc/overview/sa-protocols/> for a full list of the protocols, and links to the actual documents.

developments in the field of vulnerability assessments and risk mapping (Marsland 2004). It provided a platform for better coordination among governments as well as key technical and international non-governmental agencies involved in vulnerability monitoring and emergency responses, and as such formed a new partnership (Darcy et al. 2003). The VAC consists of the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs), which each consists of SADC representatives, government officials from relevant national departments, and actors of International Cooperating Partners (ICPs). The VAC, although operating as an information unit to the southern African governing subsystem, also shares members with the subsystem. The boundaries between actor roles—providing or applying information—are thus blurred. As explored in the introductory chapter, boundaries that are less defined and allow for renegotiation improve the vitality of the system. Processes related to the transfer of research to policy would specifically benefit from negotiable boundaries, as it can accommodate boundary management and objects as defined in the introduction.

Table 3: A comparison of emphases by different governing approaches

	A: State-society-corporate politics	B: Networked governance	C: Adaptive, deliberative, reflexive governance
Entities and spaces	Distinct, bounded organisations and interest groups (states, international organisations, civil society/movement, corporation). Formal arenas and spaces.	Multiple actors, fuzzy boundaries, networked interactions across scales. Multiple spaces (claimed, everyday, interstitial).	Shifting solidarities and interdependencies, institutions re-negotiated through adaptation and deliberation. Marginal, transient and inter-institutional spaces.
Emphases from social theory	Structures; formal rules and codes; relationships based on givens (e.g. sovereignty, assumed trust).	Actor-orientation; agency (e.g. of bureaucrats, citizens); informal rules and norms; structuration of institutions through practice; path-dependency.	Institutions, agency and relationships (re)negotiated through adaptation and deliberation.
Power and knowledge	Power as material political economy; sovereignty; centralised; competing political interests. Knowledge as 'truth speaks to power'; objective evidence and sound science; expertise constituted through official channels and hierarchies.	Power as dispersed (capillary) and operating through networks; power 'to' act as well as power over.	Power/knowledge as co-constituted through discourse; framings; multiple knowledges and forms of expertise including citizen and experiential; knowledge politics; co-construction of knowledge with institutions and governance processes.
Dealing with uncertainty	Plans and blueprints; assumptions of certainty and stability in social- technical- ecological systems; technical approach to risk.	Multiple interactions and contingencies in political process recognised as creating uncertainty in governance processes and outcomes. Little attention to ecology/ technology, dynamics and uncertainties.	Radical uncertainty due to social- technological- ecological dynamics (adaptive governance) and interaction of framings (reflexive governance). Learning, argumentation, deliberation.

Source: Adapted from Leach et al. (2007: 34-35).

However, certain governing tensions in the VAC challenge boundary management. Although the VAC has its own overarching mandate, it is not necessarily synthesised with that of national government departments or the participating ICPs. Ideas about governance brought in by ICPs do not match multi-sectoral governing approaches still employed by member governments. Although the multi-sectoral nature of governments will be further explored in Chapters Five to Seven, it is important to clarify the meaning of the term in the context of this research.

Governments in southern Africa consist of different departments tending to different sectors such as agriculture, health, social welfare, and economic development. A challenge that has emerged from this multi-

sectoral structure is coordination across departments. As each department works within a specific sector, it tends not to cooperate with others. As one interviewee noted: “The diverse information systems are not well coordinated. This has meant duplication of information and in some cases resulting in institutional conflicts, over-abundance of information and lack of standardisation leading to confusion for decision makers. Networking and partnerships between stakeholders responsible for generating food security and vulnerability information is not well defined and developed” (Int. 1 supplemented to Landman 2013). However, some issues such as vulnerability and food security require coordination of and cooperation between these departments for more effective approaches in solving related issues. Food security is often a responsibility under agricultural departments, but also requires inputs and actions from departments such as health, social and economic development. Also see 4.3.1, p.78 for a discussion on this topic.

These tensions between ICPs and governments are further enhanced by the process of formalising NVACs within national governments through the Regional Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) programme. As explored in Chapters Five to Seven, the formalisation process has increased governments’ power and decreased that of ICPs. Nevertheless, ICPs remain involved in VAC work, as governments depend on international funding and ICPs’ technical assistance.

Governing tensions also exist within VAC structures. Initially the RVAC was instituted as the governing arm of the VAC. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, the RVAC’s role has changed since the inception of the VAC, with a number of implications. Since 2005, around the same time as the VAC mandate was finalised, the RVAC launched the five-year RVAA programme to formalise the VAC system within national governments. The RVAA programme has been renewed twice and will now run until 2016. Within the RVAA programme there is a Programme Management Unit (PMU) responsible for the main objectives of the programme. From interviews and observations, it is clear that the PMU has in many ways taken over the original governing role of the RVAC, with the latter taking a step back and now playing a reduced guidance role in the VAC. Nothing needs to be approved by the RVAC, as it doesn’t have any access to resources or the authority to allocate them. This power shift has implications for the transfer of vulnerability information to policy, and is also discussed in Chapter Six.

Based on these governing tensions within the SADC and the VAC, as well as the governance descriptions in Table 3, it is challenging to place the VAC system in only one box. Parts of the first two descriptions in Table 3 are relevant to the VAC: distinct bounded organisations such as governments and ICPs constitute the VAC. As explored in Chapter Six, however, SADC member states are struggling with the process of relinquishing control to a regional governing body. Consequently the SADC continues to use formal spaces to deliberate. VAC operations also reflect this, as it works with the understanding that good quality vulnerability information would speak to power. These characteristics place the VAC towards the government end of the government-governance continuum.

Further drawing on Table 3, some of the boundaries between VAC actors also tend to get fuzzy as they move between various bounded organisations and begin to fulfil multiple roles, as also explored in the thesis introduction. Interactions also take place over different scales. In an attempt to maintain a multi-agency body,

power is dispersed in the VAC system. Expertise has entered the system from multiple sources, including ICPs and national governments. Frameworks have been co-developed in the context of the VAC system (see Chapters Five and Six). ICPs' interpretation of vulnerability at the time of the inception of the VAC has also had an influence on how the VAC has shaped the vulnerability discourse (see Chapter Four). These characteristics move the VAC towards the governance end of the government-governance continuum and we begin to observe the various characteristics of the governance modes named in columns B and C in Table 3.

The governing mode of the VAC is thus complex. Although it falls under a larger SADC body (which seems to reflect governance), and although the VAC itself is a multi-agency organisation, one of the ultimate mandated outcomes of the VAC is developing national policies, which are hard-governing instruments evident of governing by a government. I thus argue that the VAC does not sit clearly on a position on the continuum, but moves between two extremes. According to Leroy and Arts (2006:12) "...institutionalisation, modernisation and ... governance come together when ... for instance, local environmental groups get in touch with experts and policy makers at [a regional]¹⁰ level, passing by their national governmental level and decision making procedures, thereby *de facto* creating new political spaces". This point of convergence is clearly identifiable in the SADC VAC. Leroy and Arts (2006) argue that the PAA can accommodate an investigation of this nexus (see 2.4).

2.3.3 Neglected governance dimensions

Additional themes that will be explored throughout the thesis under the governance umbrella are three neglected governance dimensions: a) the character of ecological processes that governance seeks to influence and how these processes interact with and are co-constructed by government; b) risk and uncertainty, or more broadly, incertitude; and c) questions around the politics of knowledge (Leach et al. 2007).

Leach et al. (2007) argue that political ecology, rooted in Marxian economy, aims to unmask the inequality, hierarchies and material power in people-environment relationships, which is a different approach to cultural ecology and ecological anthropology, which see human resource-use and adaptation as a harmonious process supported by an adaptive function of culture (Leach et al. 2007). A number of contextual issues that go beyond social and political contexts led to the emergence of the VAC. The necessity of the VAC was solidified by the food security emergencies in the early 2000s. These emergencies manifested as the result of a number of intersecting drivers such as low production outputs, floods, drought, and high food prices (see Chapter Four) (Misselhorn, Drimie & Schwabe 2007; Holloway et al. 2013). It is clear that ecological dynamics contribute to vulnerability, which is the very issue the VAC aims to assess. As explored specifically in Chapter Four, but also in Chapters Five to Seven, ecological dynamics is still only part of emerging discourses and have not yet materialised as part of actual vulnerability assessments. Furthermore, VAC members' assumptions about vulnerability do not consider inequality, hierarchies, and power in people-environment relationships. There are, however, concerns about how vulnerability information is politicised by

¹⁰ In this sentence I've replaced the original word 'European' with 'regional' to better relate it to the southern African context.

governments, also explored in Chapter Six.

To effectively govern in complex SESs, it is essential to expose inequality, hierarchies and power in people-environment relationships. This is also reflected and argued in a 2014 study that found that a combination of inequitable policies, huge disparities in power, and criminal activities perpetrated and sustained by wealthy elites both inside and outside the continent, are keeping sub-Saharan Africa vulnerable (Sharples, Jones & Martin 2014). The study compared what sub-Saharan Africa lost to the rest of the world to what it received in aid and other inflows. The study was conducted and the report produced as part of the European Union framework of the project, Health Workers for all and all for Health Workers. The study, entitled *Honest Accounts: The true story of Africa's billion dollar losses* found that although sub-Saharan Africa receives US\$134 billion in aid and other inflows from the rest of the world, it loses US\$192 billion to amongst other things profits made by multi-national companies, climate change, tax evasions, loans to other government, and debt payments, creating a US\$58 billion net loss each year (Sharples et al. 2014). According to the study, US\$192 billion is more than the global (not just African) annual need to eliminate hunger, provide universal primary education, improve access to secondary education, offer affordable health coverage for a range of diseases, ensure safe water and sanitation, and sustainable energy. The argument supported by the study is the following:

Africa is not poor; but a combination of inequitable policies, huge disparities in power and criminal activities perpetrated and sustained by wealthy elites both inside and outside the continent are keeping its people in poverty. The UK and other wealthy governments are at the heart of this theft. Helping Africa to address its developmental challenges means exposing the aid smokescreen, and changing those government policies that damage the continent.

(Sharples, Jones & Martin 2014:8)

Although the larger sub-Saharan African picture and global power dynamics are outside the scope of this study, it nevertheless aims to make a contribution to better understanding the political processes that keep southern Africa vulnerable.

Leach et al. (2007) also argue that new governance modes neglect risk and uncertainty, or more broadly, incertitude. Modern governments are comfortable working with risk management, aiming to reduce the complex and uncertain dynamics of the real world, yet ignore other key dimensions of incertitude, including uncertainty, ambiguity and ignorance, where we don't even know what we don't know (Leach et al. 2007). Although risk management discourses surfaced a few times during interviews with VAC members, and one policy influenced by Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) outputs specifically relates to risk management (see Chapter Seven), no mention was made of uncertainty or of issues of ambiguity and ignorance. By implementing risk management programmes to reduce the complexities and uncertainties of the world we live in, without acknowledging the other dimensions of incertitude, it could be argued that governments assume that they could control or predict complex SESs, whereas complexity theory shows us it is not possible.

Leach et al. (2007) argue that to effectively govern in complex SESs, it is essential to acknowledge and build the capacity necessary to accommodate uncertainty and ambiguity. In Chapter Four I indicate that although not explicitly acknowledged by VAC actors, the challenges it is dealing with are fraught with uncertainty.

Examples include the application of diverse methods and the consequent divergence of the outcomes of estimations of food insecurity. One of the key motivations for the VAC was that it would create a platform to better deal with divergent outcomes of food security in the region, and yet the institutionalised application of a diversity of methods perpetuates a level of uncertainty. It could be argued that this rule allows for better contextualised outcomes, which would only be valid if the VAC can demonstrate how it is effectively reducing regional vulnerability. If the VAC is to address vulnerability, it must take complexity into account and acknowledge uncertainty. Such awareness would call for better monitoring and evaluation of assessments and policies that constantly adapt to contextual changes.

Current governance modes also neglect questions around the politics of knowledge (Leach et al. 2007). The current dominant model is that truth (or evidence) speaks to power. Governing bodies thus ask questions around how the evidence is applied to govern, and not who constructed it, or what their conceptualisations of the world or their social commitments were (Leach et al. 2007). As explored in Chapter Five, discourses around the application of vulnerability information calls for greater efforts to improve its usage, yet the common understanding amongst members, clearly manifested in actions, are that the VAC is merely responsible for producing the information and that ICPs should then use it to inform emergency response programmes. Furthermore, with the process of formalising NVACs in national governments, vulnerability information has become politicised and applied for alternative reasons to reducing regional vulnerability (see Chapter Five).

Interviewees also did not raise questions or concerns about how the information was being constructed or by whom. Although the research for this PhD thesis was predominantly investigating how and if vulnerability information was being applied, it was also concerned with who constructed the research (actors in Chapter Six), their conceptualisations of the world (discourses in Chapter Five), their social commitments (understandings around the aim of the VAC explored in Chapter Five), and to some degree how they constructed the research (methodological frameworks in Chapters Five to Seven). If the VAC is to effectively address vulnerability, it needs to stay true to the challenges at hand. To do so, it is necessary to make explicit the power relations around what is investigated, why and how. Exposing these will protect the salience, credibility, and legitimacy of knowledge, as explored under boundary management in the thesis introduction.

2.4 Policy arrangements

Policy arrangements are “...the temporary stabilisation of the content and organisation of a particular policy domain at a certain policy level or over several policy levels...” (Leroy & Arts 2006:13). A policy arrangement thus refers to the way in which the content and organisation of a particular policy area stabilise temporarily in a specific time and place—a momentary stabilisation of institutions or the rules by which the system operates. Policy arrangements ideally include and lead to policies, which in turn aim for the continuity or change of practices (Crewe & Young 2002). In short, institutional dynamics give shape to policy arrangements, whilst policy arrangements give institutional dynamics agency (Pelling et al. 2008).

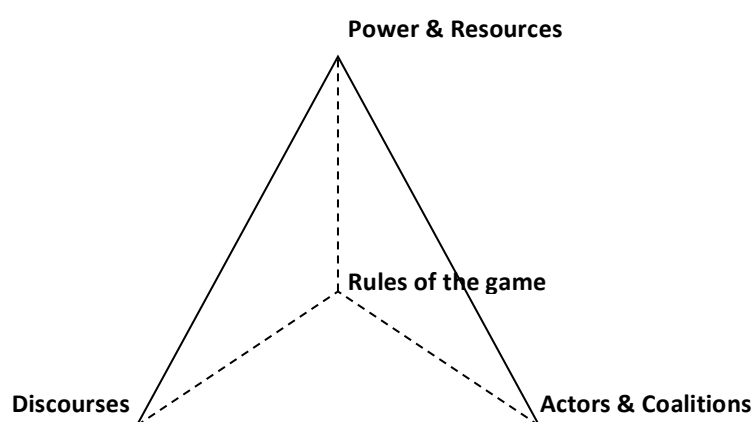
There are a number of policy levels to the VAC policy arrangement. There is the national policy level, which

forms part of the VAC mandate, yet there is also the intergovernmental policy level at the SADC level, and a number of levels on which ICPs have influence including national, intergovernmental and international levels. The policy arrangement of the VAC system thus extends over a number of policy levels, and the PAA framework is able to accommodate it. In Chapters Five to Seven, the four dimensions of the PAA are theoretically discussed on governing and day-to-day policy actions levels.

According to Liefferink (2006), theories used for the evaluation of policy processes include discourse analysis (Hajer 1995), policy network approaches (Glasbergen 1989; Marsh & Rhodes 1992), and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1994). Instead of replacing them, the PAA draws from each to provide an integrated multi-dimensional framework to approach policy as an institutional phenomenon. Reflecting on Figure 9, one can imagine the PAA sitting on the point where the two continua cross, drawing on approaches and frameworks from all four quadrants. This is an important feature of the framework to take note of, as many other frameworks could arguably have been applied to answer the research question (see for example the Advocacy Coalition Framework by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1994), and Sabatier and Weible (2007), and the Robustness Framework by Anderies, Janssen and Ostrom (2004), and Anderies and Janssen (2013)). However, the integrated nature of the PAA and its flexibility allowed for a more organic research process to emerge.

As mentioned before, the PAA offers four integrated dimensions: actors and coalitions; resources and power; rules of the game; and discourses (Liefferink 2006). The four dimensions are inseparably interrelated like the corners of a tetrahedron (see Figure 11), yet the interrelatedness does not imply that policy arrangements are harmonious, stable and/or internally consistent (Liefferink 2006). The interrelatedness of the PAA dimensions also conveys that of complex system components. By focusing on these PAA dimensions in isolation, one would not be able to derive insights about the policy arrangement; instead it is necessary to focus on the relationships between these dimensions to explain emergent properties of the arrangement. If Figure 11 were to be layered onto Figure 6 in the thesis introduction, it would provide a closer look at the institutional dynamics of the VAC in Figure 6.

Figure 11: The PAA tetrahedron



Source: Adapted from Liefferink (2006:48)

Liefferink (2006) highlights a number of features of the PAA: a) It recognises that a policy arrangement is

part of society and thus influences and is influenced by the context(s) within which it operates. This is a vital feature with regards to the VAC system, as the VAC emerged to address regional vulnerability, and in turn is trying to influence the southern African region. Except for the food security emergencies that motivated the establishment of VAC system, and endorsed it, there were also other contributing contextual issues that must be considered in order to answer the research question. Chapter Four contains an explanation of how the southern African context and VAC policy arrangement are linked through feedback loops. The contextual factors that led to the development of the VAC clearly emerges in the PAA dimensions as discussed in Chapters Five to Seven.

b) The PAA allows for an understanding of a policy issue at a given point in time, as well as over time. It is therefore not limited to studying older policy arrangements, as in the case of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, which require a policy arrangement to be at least ten years old. Although the VAC is almost 16 years old, its policy influence has been limited. If only studying the four policies it has influenced, very little would be revealed about the blockages to and catalysts for the usage of vulnerability information in policy processes. It is thus important to consider the policy arrangement over time and to pause at certain pivotal points in its history to investigate the research question.

c) An analysis can start from any point of the tetrahedron, but different starting points will result in different perspectives—the research question will determine the starting point. Eventually all the dimensions would be covered through the perspective of the starting point e.g. if one is interested in some question relating to the actors of a policy arrangement, one would start by identifying them, but then also consider their link to resources and power, rules of the game, and discourses. The actors and coalitions dimension is most appropriate as a starting point for questions concerned with positions and roles of actors, or to get an overview of the policy arrangement around a specific issue. It is ultimately through the interactions of actors that the other three dimensions materialise (Wiering & Arts 2006). The analysis of resource dependencies and power relations are often central to political science approaches. In the case of the government-governance continuum, one could start at this dimension to look at how power and resources shift between the nation state, sub-national levels and the SADC (Wiering & Arts 2006). Wiering and Arts (2006) define institutional rules as formal procedures and informal routines of interaction between actors that are mutually accepted. Once again these rules can be studied across different policy levels from investigating the agreements between SADC members to highlighting the everyday procedures (or lack thereof) followed in the VAC. From a theoretical perspective, one can enter the discourses dimension to study political modernisation and its implications for the VAC arrangement. One could also start from this point to study changes in how actors perceive problems with the VAC or integrate new scientific insights or public opinion (Wiering & Arts 2006).

In this thesis, the research question is considered from all four corners of the PAA tetrahedron for a more comprehensive investigation. The discussion starts off from the discourse dimension, as the VAC's interpretation of regional vulnerability will determine how actors apply power and resources to address the issue. This discourse discussion also explores how discursive shifts have been stunted. Actors, coalitions, power and resources are considered next to map out who addresses issues and how. The research concludes with a thorough consideration of institutional rules that emerged because of discourses and

stunted discourses, and now determine how actors behave and apply resources and power, or not, to address regional vulnerability.

d) Liefferink further explains that because one would use different methodologies depending on the dimension used as point of entry, the PAA offers four different analytical perspectives on the same policy arrangement. Gathering the information necessary to fill out the PAA framework and answer the research questions requires a combination of stakeholder meetings, document reviews, in-depth interviews, and observations. These are discussed in detail in Chapter Three. For most dimensions, a combination of data gathering techniques informs the findings reported in Chapters Four to Seven.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter further justified the use of the PAA as an appropriate analytical framework to answer the research question as it applies to the VAC case study. The three grounding principles of the PAA were discussed and applied to the southern African context and/or VAC case study, including institutions, political modernisation and policy arrangements. The government-governance continuum was introduced to conceptualise the governing subsystem of which the VAC forms part. Four types of governance were also discussed. The complex governing mode of the VAC emerged to deal with the uncertainty of regional vulnerability challenges. Except for risk, uncertainty, and incertitude more broadly, two other neglected governance themes were introduced: the dynamics between ecological drivers and governance, and the politics of knowledge. These three themes are explored throughout the thesis. Finally the PAA and some key characteristics of the framework were introduced. Similarly to complexity theory, the elements of the PAA are interrelated and only through interaction between these elements do outputs and outcomes emerge. The PAA lends itself to a more comprehensive overview of the policy arrangement, whilst also remaining grounded in contextual matters. Contextual changes manifest through the PAA dimensions. If, for example, a food security emergency takes form in southern Africa, the way actors interpret related challenges will manifest through discourses, eventually forming institutions that guide the way VAC actors apply power resources to address the issue. By identifying and exploring the contextual influences that led to the emergence of the VAC arrangement in Chapter Four, it is possible to demonstrate how these contextual issues manifest in the PAA dimensions in Chapters Five to Seven. The context and policy arrangement are connected by feedback loops.

Chapter Three: Methodology and methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the process that produced the research question, as well as the qualitative research design and methods used to answer the question. I explore how a qualitative case study design complements the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) and why discourse analysis, document reviews, semi-structured qualitative interviews, observations, and e-mail correspondences were the most appropriate methods to inform the case study. This chapter also confirms the boundaries of the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) system and provides a detailed description of the research process. An overview of the analysis of data also includes explanations of key retrieval processes used in Atlas.ti. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the limitations of the study.

3.2 The research question

The research question, as introduced in Chapter One, is:

What are the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policy processes that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?

The research question concerns vulnerability research outputs, its use in national policy processes in southern Africa, and a reduction in regional vulnerability as the outcome of successfully implemented policies. Outputs and outcomes differ; outputs being actual concrete products delivered, such as research reports or policy or programme documents, and outcomes referring to the difference or change created as a result of an output, for example the reduction of vulnerability or a dependency on foreign aid. The research question assumes that successfully implemented policies could lead to a reduction in regional vulnerability and that the use of vulnerability research would better contextualise such policies. It thus also assumes that better contextualised policies would be more effective in reducing regional vulnerability, while acknowledging that research is not the only form of knowledge that could inform policy processes.

This research question became clearer after much of the data gathering was completed. I realised that the questions I posed in my PhD proposal (see Box 1) were indicative of the fact that I hadn't been immersed in the case study yet. When reading the original questions after full immersion in the data, they seemed too rigid in applying the analytical framework before considering the research problem. As an example, the original questions are about Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NVAC) policies, whilst the case study clearly demonstrates that although many actors are involved in the policy process, the policies ultimately belong to national governments. Furthermore, the RVAC and NVACs are now considered parts of the same policy arrangement. Nevertheless, the original questions allowed me to start the research process, and as such still form an essential part of it. Some of these original questions are still answered through the research, whilst others are no longer relevant. The questions that are inherently answered in this thesis include 1a–b, 1e–i, and 2. The phrasing of questions 1c, 1d, and 3 make them unanswerable, as the RVAC and NVAC are part of one policy arrangement, the VAC, and they do not have policies.

Box 1: The original research questions

1. How have institutional dynamics in the RVAC and NVACs influenced policy arrangements since 1999, and how have these policy arrangement changes influenced policies that seek food system resilience?
 - a. What were the founding policy arrangements within the RVAC and NVACs?
 - b. What are the current policy arrangements within the RVAC and NVACs?
 - c. What were the founding RVAC policies?
 - d. What are the current RVAC policies?
 - e. Which institutional shift(s) (with regards to actors and coalitions; resources and power; rules of the game; and discourses) have taken place since the inception of the RVAC?
 - f. Are there indications of why these shift(s) took place?
 - g. Who are supporters of these shift(s), who are not and why?
 - h. Which NVACs have translated these shifts into policies, why and how?
 - i. Which NVACs are internally considered most successful and why?
2. What is the position of research evidence in RVAC and NVAC institutional dynamics?
 - a. Do research evidence influence institutional dynamics: actors and coalitions; resources and power; rules of the game; and discourses? How?
 - b. Who produces research in the RVAC and NVAC network? How? For whom?
 - c. What role do institutional dynamics play in the use of research evidence for policy-making?
3. Is research evidence used in RVAC and NVAC policies that seek food system resilience?
 - a. What are the main scientific sources used for research evidence within the RVAC and NVACs?
 - b. How are/were these sources chosen?
 - c. How are these sources applied?

3.3 Methodology

A qualitative approach is most appropriate for studying complex systems, complexities, processes and linkages (Marshall & Rossman 1999) that require in-depth and descriptive investigations (Yin 2011). If quantitative research can be simplified as dealing with numbers, then qualitative research deals with meanings, which are in turn mediated through language (text and images) and human action (Dey 1993). We can study the meaning of people's lives under real-world conditions, represented by the views and perspectives of those investigated. Qualitative research also accommodates context-specific research (Yin 2011).

Studying real-life scenarios differs from with the self-contained nature of other types of research settings, such as a quiet laboratory with defined working conditions and research hours (Yin 2011). Qualitative research arguably requires flexibility in terms of research hours, settings, and conditions (Yin 2011). This need for flexibility in qualitative research challenges the requirement for a research design. Even though qualitative research should start out with a design, later fieldwork will benefit if the researcher ignores the design temporarily to allow the field to tell its story first and only later comparing that story with the initial propositions (Yin 2011). Qualitative research that stays true to the context thus requires this inductive stance, which permits the field narrative to drive later development of propositions, themes, categories, and eventually the construction of meaning (Yin 2011).

The primary research instrument in qualitative research is the fieldworker or researcher. It is essential that the researcher is aware of her potential biases and idiosyncrasies (Flyvbjerg 2011; Yin 2011), including issues arising from her personal background, her motives for doing the research and the categories or filters that may manipulate her interpretations and understanding of the events and actions in the field (Flyvbjerg

2011; Yin 2011). Flyvbjerg (2011) states that even so, it is vital for the development of the researcher to gain context-dependent experience. Throughout the research it was my intention to remain aware of my personal biography and beliefs, and to continuously and systematically reflect on their possible influence on the research. Consequently, it is important that I relate some of the personal elements I bring to the research process for those readers who will find it relevant.

I am a white Afrikaans woman, who as a member of the cultural group responsible for apartheid in South Africa, the Afrikaners, has benefitted from its inequality. Nevertheless, having grown up as farmer's daughter in the bushveld of South Africa, I also strongly identify with being African, and advocate transformation and equality for others on the continent. I was fortunate enough to complete most of my school years after the fall of apartheid. Consequently I reached adulthood during a time in South Africa where transformation was emphasised, and although it is a complex on going challenge, I am committed to this vision within South Africa specifically. My ideas about socio-ecological systems and alternative sustainable futures were shaped by my MPhil degree in Sustainable Development Management and Planning, which I completed in 2010 at Stellenbosch University. I understand sustainable development not only as a reality in which people develop by using resources within the limits of the earth's biocapacity, but also as developing infrastructure that exists in a mutualistic relationship with ecological systems¹¹. To address the severe inequalities faced by the human population today, the equal redistribution of resources within the earth's biocapacity would need to form part of this process¹². I am convinced that achieving sustainability entails extensive, global systemic changes.

Given this stance, it is important to acknowledge that this research contains an element of transformative intent, namely the promotion of greater resilience and adaptive capacity amongst marginalised vulnerable communities in southern Africa. The region has been locked into a perpetual cycle of vulnerability, and without beginning a process to build greater resilience and adaptive capacity, a sustainable future will not be possible.

As primary research instrument, the researcher requires certain competencies. Yin (2011) identifies six. Firstly, the researcher must know the study topic theoretically and be knowledgeable about the field setting and participants. With a Masters degree in Sustainable Development, I was contracted as support consultant on various development projects. For one such project I was invited to attend a 2011 AOM of the VAC system to take notes for Prof. Drimie, who at the time was acting as facilitator to the meeting. He later became one of my supervisors. Prof. Drimie has worked in a consultancy capacity with the VAC since 2003, when first employed with the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa, and as discussed later, also assisted in negotiating my research access to the VAC system. The 2011 AOM was my first encounter with the VAC system. Taking notes at the meeting about what everyone was saying compelled me to really observe the research field and introduced me to the setting and VAC actors. In the same year I also started working on a literature review for my PhD proposal, covering a wide range of topics to best frame the

¹¹ See Positive Development as conceptualised by Birkeland (2008).

¹² See *Just Transitions: Explorations of Sustainability in an Unfair World* by Swilling and Annecke (2012). Written from a southern African perspective, this book reconciles the sustainable use of natural resources with a commitment to sufficiency, which requires over-consumers to use less, so that under-consumers can have enough.

research problem. Only after seven months of refining the PhD proposal did I realise the applicability of the VAC as case study. I then started collecting official VAC documents that were publicly available and read other studies about the VAC. I discuss the literature and VAC document reviews in greater detail further on.

Secondly, the researcher must have the ability to listen with all her senses—not only hearing what is being said, but also reading situations and research participants' non-verbal cues (Yin 2011). This skill includes not talking unnecessarily. Thirdly, the researcher must have the ability to ask good questions; relevant questions are more likely to extract critical information (Yin 2011). This skill goes hand-in-hand with good listening skills (Yin 2011). Although rather obvious, it is nevertheless important to take cognisance of these requirements.

Yin (2011) fourthly argues that field data should take a near-priceless status during the research. I kept all my literature summaries, reflections, and field notes in journals, and filed loose note sheets with signed participant consent forms. Interview recordings were kept on the recorder and on my computer until I received and reviewed the transcripts of the recordings. A company called the Typing Pool transcribed recordings. The manager of the Typing Pool agreed to sign a nondisclosure agreement to protect the content of interviews. Before being deleted, every recording was listened to whilst reading its transcript. Transcripts were saved on my computer and in Dropbox, an online file hosting service that offers file synchronisation and cloud storage. I also stored the hermeneutic unit used for the analysis in Atlas.ti and my developing thesis on my computer and in Dropbox.

A researcher must also be able to do parallel tasks (Yin 2011). The nature of qualitative research and in particular the recursive relationships between study design, data collection and analysis, requires a researcher to be constantly aware of other aspects of the research while also concentrating on the task at hand. A skilled researcher would be able to reflect on data collected up to a certain point and then ask clarifying questions in an interview if the participant touches on the related topic. She will be able to do this whilst making the participant feel comfortable enough to talk to her and taking field notes, for example. Finally, Yin (2011) says that a researcher should have perseverance. "This word is meant to cover a variety of personal qualities—all somehow related to an ability to stick to your quest in the face of the inevitable frustrations, uncertainties, and even unpleasantities that you can confront in doing qualitative research" (Yin 2011:30). The researcher must be able to move on with the work, despite resistance and challenges. I have had ample opportunity during this study to hone these personal qualities.

The trustworthiness and credibility of the research hang on three objectives: transparency, being methodical, and adherence to the evidence (Yin 2011). Transparency in qualitative research requires the researcher to document and describe the research process in detail, so that others can review, scrutinise, and try to understand the work. All data needs to be available for inspection (Yin 2011). This chapter contains a thorough description of the research process, and data that informed the findings is available for further assessment by interested parties.

Being methodical requires adherence to a set of procedures, which minimises careless work. It also includes explaining bias and avoiding distortions during the research process (Yin 2011). A key bias that had to be

addressed during the research process was the involvement of Prof. Drimie in the VAC and his contribution to the selection of the first round of interviewees. His contribution was crucial, as it facilitated access to the VAC, yet was also carefully managed to minimise bias. The issue of bias was openly discussed with Prof. Drimie at the outset of the study. As such, care was taken that only entry points into the system were identified that I was then able to use to begin an initial set of interviews that snowballed into others. Snowball sampling is typically used to locate key informants in studies of social networks (Bernard 2000). It was also applied to offset any bias Prof. Drimie's suggestions may have brought into the study.

Methodical research also requires cross-checking and being thorough throughout the entire research process (Yin 2011). Using multiple sources of data also allows for triangulation, seeking convergence or corroboration of the data (Bowen 2009). The different data sources are explained in 3.4.2.

A final crucial point about qualitative research is that the real-world situations with people living their day-to-day lives require the researcher to enter and exit the field with some formality. This includes obtaining the necessary permissions (Yin 2011). For the VAC study, I first obtained ethical clearance from the first of two Health Research Ethics Committees at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science of Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The research was ethically cleared for one year from 3 April 2013 (see Appendix 2), and the clearance was renewed for another year on 14 February 2014 (see Appendix 3). The ethics reference number for the clearance is S13/03/045. I then submitted my research protocol and ethics clearance to the VAC Programme Management Unit (PMU) to ask for access to interviewees in the selected NVAC countries. The Regional Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme Coordinator in the PMU issued a letter, which was distributed to all VAC members, informing them of my intentions and urging them to participate (see Appendix 4).

Although gaining access to the field may seem most important, an exit strategy should not be neglected (Yin 2011). Yin (2011) explains that the researcher, having worked in the field, would know best what exit strategy to pursue. As part of negotiating access to the VAC system, I pledged to write a report specifically for the VAC, containing recommendations for better applying vulnerability information in policy processes. Once my thesis is submitted, I will rework the chapters into a more appropriate format and submit a report with key recommendations to all the NVAC heads.

3.4 Research design

The research design is a set of procedures and guidelines designed to increase the probability that gathered information will deliver "relevant, reliable, unbiased, and valid answers" (Blalock & Blalock 1982:8). Although this goal is unattainable, a dedicated design will come closer to this goal than an ill-defined one (Blalock & Blalock 1982). As mentioned earlier, qualitative research requires an initial design that should be ignored temporarily whilst doing fieldwork to allow the field narrative to emerge, but the researcher should come back to the design once the interpretation of the data begins (Yin 2011). The research design for this work was a case study of the VAC system. Various methods were applied to inform the VAC case study.

3.4.1 The case study

There is no pre-determined formula to determine whether or not a case study approach is the most relevant design to answer the research questions (Yin 2006). However, the more complex and contextualised the objects of research, and the greater the need for an extensive and in-depth investigation, the more relevant the case study approach will be (Scholz & Olaf 2002; Yin 2006). Flyvbjerg quotes the Merriam-Webster's dictionary to define a case study: "*Case Study*. An intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment" (2011:301). He explains that the individual unit can be studied in a variety of ways and that this will not determine whether or not it is a case study; instead the boundaries of the unit will do so (Flyvbjerg 2011).

In the case of the VAC system, the boundaries of the case include only the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR), RVAC, NVACs, and RVAA PMU. The policy arrangement thus includes these actors. Only five NVACs were selected as subunits for investigation within the larger VAC case: the South African Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SAVAC), Swaziland Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SwaziVAC), Mozambican Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN), Zimbabwean Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC), and Malawian Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC). Each of these NVACs consisted of a number of members from governments and International Cooperating Partners (ICPs). These five NVACs are not representative of the entire VAC system, but instead offer a look into the larger VAC system or case. It is important to remember that interview contributions and e-mail correspondences came only from these five NVACs, some RVAC members and key consultants.

The definition Flyvbjerg (2011) chose for case study also specifies that case studies are intensive, meaning they are rich, and full of detail and variety, different from studies that comprise of cross-unit analysis. The case study definition stresses developmental factors, which indicates that cases develop over time, as well as the case's relation to the environment, meaning it should be studied within context (Flyvbjerg 2011). The boundaries of the case also determine what is included in the case and what is considered as the context (Flyvbjerg 2011). The context of the VAC system includes everything that influences its activities. Initially I wanted to define its context as everything within the SADC region that influences its activities, yet it became clear that funding and discourses shaping VAC activities were not limited to the SADC region. Even environmental factors beyond the SADC region's boundaries have influenced VAC activities, and so its context must include everything else not included in the case study. This, however, would be unmanageable; and so in this research, the context is limited to manifestations within the SADC region, whether influenced from outside or inside the region, that bear on the VAC system. Funding applied in the SADC region, though originating from outside the region, will thus form part of the context. The same applies for international discourses that influence VAC activities, or climate variations that impact the region. Yin (2009) states that the boundaries between the case and its context is not clear, due to the influences of the context on the case.

Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011) identifies five misconceptions about case studies. The first is that as concrete case knowledge, it is less valuable than theoretical knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011) argues that this is invalid,

as someone can only become an expert once she has intimate knowledge of thousands of cases related to the same topic. He also argues that predictive theories in social science will most likely never exist; understanding real-life contexts always requires in-depth inquiries that cannot be generalised (Flyvbjerg 2011). The second is that an individual case cannot contribute to scientific development, because it cannot be generalised. Flyvbjerg (2011) uses well-known scientific experiments, where single cases disproved theories and was then used as the basis to generalise by creating scientific laws. Nevertheless, he also states "...that formal generalization, be it on the basis of large samples or single cases, is considerably overrated as the main source of scientific progress" (Flyvbjerg 2011:305). A third and rather dated misconception is that case studies are only useful for generating a hypothesis as part of the first stage of a total research process, whilst other methods should be applied to test the hypothesis and build a theory. Some also claim that a case study approach contains bias toward verification or the researcher's preconceived notions about the case (Flyvbjerg 2011). As the researcher is required to lay bare any preconceived ideas about the case before starting the research, it is easy to see if this is indeed the case. Flyvbjerg (2011) has, however, also found that researchers using a case study approach have often discovered that their preconceived ideas were wrong and declared this in their reports. The last misconception is that case studies do not accommodate summaries and consequently the development of general propositions and theories. Flyvbjerg notes that it is difficult to summarise cases, but not because of the method—rather because of what it represents. It is not desirable to summarise cases, as they represent complex realities (Flyvbjerg 2011). One would thus attempt to create an even simpler model of an already simplified version of reality, which would result in an even greater loss of the richness of the case one aims to describe.

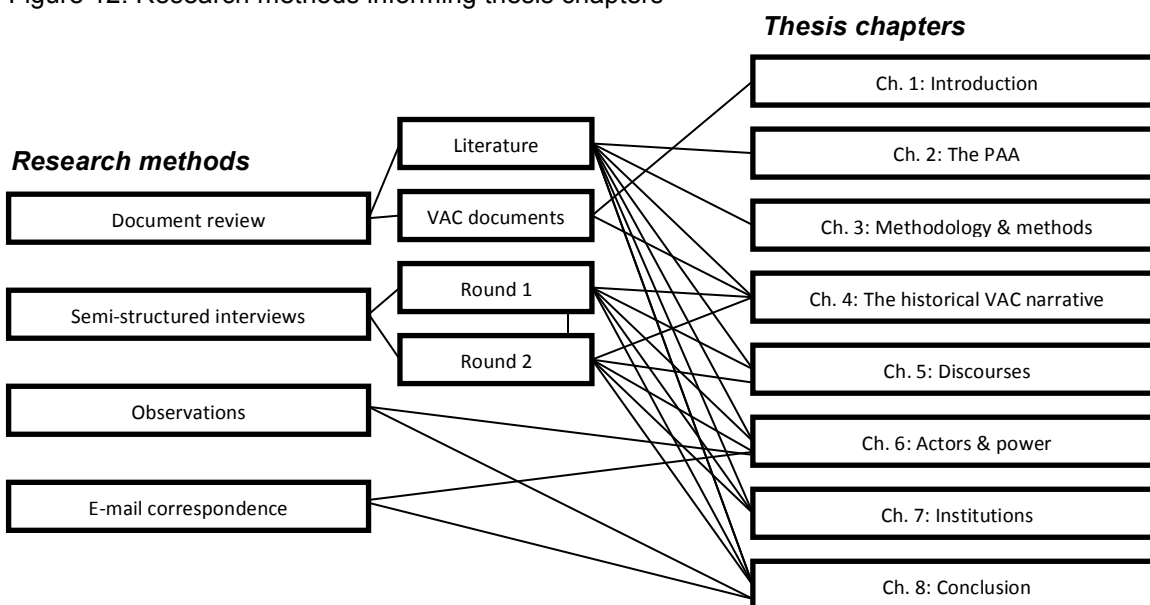
Scholz and Olaf (2002) offer a number of considerations for outlining a case, including the kind of case study, its epistemological status, and its format. The VAC study is an embedded case study, because it involves more than one unit of analysis. The main unit is the entire VAC system, and the smaller units consist of the RVAC and five NVACs: SAVAC, SwaziVAC, ZimVAC, MVAC, and SETSAN. Every subunit served a specific purpose in the overall scope of the study. The ZimVAC and MVAC were investigated as two of the oldest and most established NVACs in the system. They also offered insights into the formalisation process and the politicisation of vulnerability information. SETSAN was also chosen for being well established within the VAC system, yet was also identified as an NVAC that has become weak. The SAVAC and SwaziVAC are both struggling with the formalisation process and thus offered insight into related challenges and how NVACs were able to operate without being embedded within government structures. The SAVAC, SwaziVAC, and SETSAN were also conveniently located near my research office in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The VAC case's epistemological status is that it is a descriptive study (Scholz & Olaf 2002). It is different from an exploratory case study conducted as part of the first step of a larger research study in that it is informed by a reference theory and framework (Scholz & Olaf 2002). The VAC study was informed by complexity theory, whilst I applied the PAA to direct data collection, organisation, and analysis. The dimensions of the PAA enabled a search for clarifying factors to answer the research question, by crossing one dimension at a time, with the other three dimensions. The format of the VAC case was unstructured, as its complexity did not allow for finding a best solution to a single problem (Scholz & Olaf 2002). Based on

complexity theory, and directed by the PAA, the structure of the case was explored, causes for blockages and catalysts identified, and recommendations made in the conclusion.

The research process consisted of consecutive, and partly overlapping steps. These steps naturally built on each other, and as such each step informed the following step or steps. The purpose of this design was to strengthen the study as it unfolded. Gathered information was constantly integrated into the research design to improve the next step. The methods included: 1) A comprehensive literature review; 2) A document review of reports produced by and about the VAC system; 3) A first round of seven semi-structured interviews with current and previous RVAC members and/or consultants; 4) A second round of 27 semi-structured interviews with NVAC members in five member states; 5) Observations of two AOMs in South Africa in 2011 and 2013; and 6) E-mail correspondence to inform a power chart discussed in Chapter Six. Figure 12 represents how these methods informed the various chapters of the thesis and dimensions of the PAA to compile an overall description of the VAC case. As explained in the introduction, the thesis chapters relate to the various dimensions of the PAA: discourses, actors and coalitions, power and resources, and the rules of the game.

Figure 12: Research methods informing thesis chapters



3.4.2 Methods

Both qualitative and case study¹³ research call for multiple sources of evidence (Yin 2006, 2011). The choice of source and the type of data would obviously depend on the case and research question. Sources may include documents and interviews, for example (Scholz & Olaf 2002). The point of these methods is to try and capture the contextual conditions and participant perspectives related to the case study (Yin 2011). As mentioned before and illustrated in Figure 12, I conducted a document review, semi-structured interviews, observations, and e-mail correspondence to gather data. Before discussing each of these methods individually and providing details of how I applied them, I include a short, yet relevant discussion on discourse analysis. Although not applied as a method in a distinct step, the ideas behind this method

¹³ Case study research is sometimes seen as a subset of qualitative knowledge, yet case studies can also be quantitative.

influenced all other methods and thus need consideration.

3.4.2.i. Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis challenges researchers to question policy making processes, how dialogue takes place, and how power relations produce dominant discourses and marginalises others. Such questions require researchers to be reflective, querying the research material in ways that they may not otherwise consider.

(Hewitt 2009:14)

Hewitt (2009) reviewed three discourse analysis approaches by Sharp and Richardson (2001), Flyvbjerg (2006), and Hajer (2006), all rooted in Foucauldian discourse. He found that all three seek to construct critical narratives of power relations at play. Some were more open-ended than others, yet all require a combination of qualitative research techniques, such as document reviews, interviews and observations (Hewitt 2009). Discourse analysis thus neatly slots into a qualitative case study research design. What makes this approach unique is that it is underscored by conceptual foundations, developed by Foucault, that seek specifically to interrogate power relations within cases (Hewitt 2009). A researcher applying this technique thus needs to be reflective, continuously interrogating data in ways that she may not otherwise have done, including explicitly considering the relationship between herself and the research field. The researcher thus cannot be separated from the research field and needs to take responsibility for the way knowledge is framed and discourses are produced (and reproduced) (Hewitt 2009). Hewitt (2009) presents Hajer's (2006) work in particular as an example of a more structured approach to discourse analysis. Hajer's (2006) approach is summarised in Table 4 and clearly indicates that discourse analysis informs the research design for this work (in Hewitt 2009). The added benefit of this approach was an acute awareness of power relations and discourses within the VAC system. Although specifically informing Chapters Five and Six, this awareness was maintained throughout the research process.

Table 4: Hajer's ten steps of doing discourse analysis

Step	Purpose
1. Desk Research	A first chronology and first reading of events
2. 'Helicopter Interviews'	To gain an overview from different perspectives
3. Document Analysis	To identify story lines and metaphors, and the sites of discursive struggle
4. Interviews with key players	To enable the researcher to construct the interviewee discourses and the shifts in recognition of alternative perspectives
5. Sites of argumentation	Search the data to account for the argumentative exchange
6. Analyse for positioning effects	To show how people, institutions or nation-states get caught up in an interplay
7. Identify key incidents	To understand the discursive dynamics and the outcomes
8. Analysis of practices in particular cases of argumentation	By going back to the data to see if the meaning of what is said can be related to practices
9. Interpretation	Come up with an account of the discursive structures, practices, and sites of production
10. Second visit to key actors	Respondents should recognise some of the hidden structures of language

Source: Adapted from Hewitt (2009)

3.4.2.ii Document review

Yin (2011) groups the document review as part of the collecting process in research, during which objects that are related to the study, such as documents, artefacts, and records, are collected. Searching for documents may occur before, during, and after collecting data from the research field (Yin 2011). A

document review is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies as it helps the researcher to uncover meaning, develop an understanding, and gain insights into the research problem (Bowen 2009). The document reviews in this research was done specifically to review the literature, provide details about the context of the VAC system, inform questions to ask interviewees, and track evolutions within the VAC system. These are all common uses of document reviews (Bowen 2009). The analysis of documents concerns an iterative process of “skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation”, which combines content and thematic analysis (Bowen 2009:32). Content analysis concerns the organisation of pieces of texts into categories related to the research question, whilst thematic data concerns the recognition of patterns in the data, which consequently become research themes (Bowen 2009).

The document review method was applied twice during the research process. First there was an extensive literature review of a range of topics relevant to the research, including areas of study such as Global Environmental Change (GEC), food systems, complexity theory, Socio-ecological Systems (SESs), policy research, boundary management, the PAA and qualitative research methods. This phase could be equated to Hajer’s desk research step in discourse analysis. A number of key academic journals were consulted to search for articles on these areas of study, including the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Public Administration Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *Political Research Quarterly*, and *Policy and Complex Systems*. I also did a number of web searches in Google Scholar and EbscoHost. Articles were selected for their relevance to the research topic, which at the time was concerned with the use of research outputs in policy processes. Articles were organised into themes, including agency, boundary work, change, complexity theory, governance, institutions, methodology, PAA, policy frameworks, policy research, political modernisation, power, resilience, risk, robustness, SADC, social learning, and vulnerability.

The point of this initial literature search was to engage with theoretical concepts and to see how they could be integrated to help explore the research question. This initial search also informed the research protocol I had to submit to an Evaluation Committee at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Stellenbosch University. Most of this literature is captured in the first chapter of this thesis, but also informs the theoretical discussions in each of the chapters relating to the PAA dimensions. I studied 18 texts on the PAA alone. I also consulted literature with regards to methodology and methods during this phase, which is captured in this chapter. This phase started at the end of 2011, but continued throughout the research process as new and relevant articles and books were published.

The second time I applied the document review method, it was to do a thorough document analysis of official VAC documents publicly available on the old RVAC website. As the application of vulnerability information in policy depends on its accessibility, it was thought appropriate to analyse documents readily available on the RVAA programme webpage. This part of the research is similar to Hajer’s document analysis step in discourse analysis. The point of this phase was to familiarise myself with the VAC system, to begin to identify key actors, and to trace any apparent institutional shifts. The findings from the document review also informed a preliminary discussion schedule for the semi-structured interviews with key identified RVAC and

NVAC members in South Africa (see Appendix 5 for the first discussion schedule). The reviewed key documents¹⁴ included:

Two proceeding reports that informed the Five-year RVAA programme:

- The Proceedings of the SADC FANR RVAC Retreat (7-8 June 2004); and
- Regional Stakeholder Consultation on Vulnerability Analysis in the SADC Region: Record of Proceedings (26-28 July 2004).

Five RVAA programme documents:

- Draft Synthesis Document – A Five Year Programme to Strengthen Vulnerability Analysis in the SADC region (April 2005);
- Strengthening Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis in the SADC Region through the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee: A Five Year Programme: 2005-09 (June 2005);
- Strengthening Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis in the SADC Region through the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee. A Five Year Programme: 2005-09 Annex 4: Logical Framework RVAC Five-Year Programme (June 2005);
- An Internal Review of SADC's Regional Project on Strengthening Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis. A Five Year Programme: 2006-2010 (March 2008); and
- SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme: 2nd Phase Funding Document (March 2008).

Four documents concerning capacity building and training:

- SADC PMU Discussion Paper: Capacity Building and Training Programme (CBTP) for the African Centre for Food Security (ACFS), University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) CoE¹⁵ for VAA¹⁶ partners. Suggested Training Events: Oct 2007-Dec 2008 (before June 2007);
- Institutional Review of the UKZN's ACFS as the SADC Regional Centre of Excellence for Strengthening Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (3 June 2008); and
- Terms of Reference for the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) Technical Working Group on Training and Capacity Building (TWGTCB): Second Draft (June 2009).

The latest accessible AOM Reports:

- The 2009 SADC Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme Annual Organizational Meeting Report (1-4 December 2009); and
- The 2010 SADC Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme Annual Organizational Meeting Report (6-8 December 2010).

The latest accessible Dissemination Meeting Synthesis Report:

¹⁴ Listed documents are referred to by their exact titles. Inconsistencies, especially with regards to the name of the five-year RVAA programme, originate from the original document titles. It is also important to note that none of the downloaded reports date later than 2011.

¹⁵ Centre of Excellence

¹⁶ Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis.

- SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Synthesis Report 2011 (7-8 July 2011).

These documents were read and organised chronologically. A useful tool while reading was to continuously ask: “What is this about?”, “Why is this reported?”, and “Who supports these claims?” Various texts on the analysis of qualitative data recommend this tactic (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Bernard 2000; Charmaz 2005). The analysis consisted of three components. The documents were analysed in chronological order first to *identify an emerging narrative* and secondly to *trace any institutional evolutions* (changes in actors, rules of the game, resources and power, and discourses) between 1999 and 2011. Whilst reading the documents a list of key words were compiled for use during a coding process. The coding process helped with the third component, to *identify key emerging themes*. I submitted the findings of this document review in article format and presented it at the 19th International Sustainable Development Research Conference in South Africa in June 2013. The narrative that emerged from the document review also informs Chapter Four.

The formal narrative in Chapter Four was initially compiled using *only* events reflected in these documents. These events took place before and during the time the documents were compiled, and included organisational events such as retreats and AOMs, but also external events such as food security emergencies. A limitation of this approach was that the resulting narrative did not include all the key contextual events. Fortunately, later research steps further contributed to the narrative as reported in Chapter Four. The semi-structured interviews not only corroborated or disputed some of the facts in the documents, but also assisted in identifying additional events, which I could then follow up on. The formal narrative in Chapter Four thus draws findings from both the document review and interviews.

3.4.2.iii Semi-structured interviews

Yin (2011) explains that semi-structured or qualitative interviews differ in key ways from their structured counterpart. Firstly, the researcher-participant relationship is not as strictly scripted, as there is no questionnaire with a list of fixed questions. Instead the researcher has a good idea of the questions she would like to ask, and perhaps even an interview guide, but the specific phrasing and order of the questions will depend on the context of the interview and the emerging conversation between the researcher and participant (Yin 2011). Secondly, the researcher adapts to the context and individual participant, following an appropriated style instead of a uniform demeanour across all interviews (Yin 2011). Such an attitude opens up the opportunity for two-way interactions in which the participant may even question the researcher. In one of the very first interviews I conducted with a consultant, she asked me some clarifying questions about the scale of the policies I was investigating, which in turn forced me to rethink and restructure the interview guideline. Semi-structured interviews also accommodate interviewing more than one participant simultaneously (Yin 2011), which was done twice for this research (see Table 7). Finally, semi-structured interviews allow for more open-ended questions, allowing participants to answer in their own words and take the time to really express their views about a specific topic (Yin 2011).

Yin (2011) also provides key suggestions to aspire to during semi-structured interviews. It is important to speak only modestly, and rather focus on listening to the participant. This will also allow the researcher to

analyse whilst interviewing, deciding when to probe for more detail, change topics, or adjust the direction of the interview to accommodate new insights. These probes need to be used sensitively so that the participant is not surprised or suddenly lost in the conversation. As I progressed with the interviews, these skills improved and by the last interview—although I had only a limited amount of time—I was able to retrieve critical information. Furthermore, it is important to remain non-directive: setting boundaries for the interview, but allowing the participant to colour freely in between (Yin 2011). Yin (2011) also states that an interview guideline is a useful tool during interviews. See Appendix 5 and 6 for the initial and refined interview guidelines. Remaining neutral as far as possible is also essential, as the researcher's tone of voice, body language, and opinion reflected even in the phrasing of questions, may manipulate the participant's answers (Yin 2011). I found that the course I did in qualitative research methods in 2012 greatly assisted with these skills. In line with ethical considerations, it is extremely important to maintain rapport and do absolutely no harm when interviewing participants (Yin 2011). Informing interviewees of their rights, anonymity, and the fact that they could stop the interview at any time with no negative implications for them, empowered interviewees and protected them from any harm that could result from the study (see Appendix 7 for the information sheet and consent form).

The semi-structured interviews for this research were divided into two phases. The first set of interviews was intended to provide greater details of the VAC case study, further refine the interview guide and help identify the specific NVACs I would investigate. They took the form of 'helicopter interviews' as described in Hajer's ten steps to do discourse analysis (in Hewitt 2009). I interviewed key RVAC members, as well as other NVAC members, all of whom were located in South Africa. The first phase consisted of seven interviews with eight participants that took place over a month in 2013. Five of the initial interviewees were identified with the help of Prof. Drimie, whilst the others were identified through snowball sampling. The criteria we used to select the first five interviewees were that these individuals had to be current decision-makers and members of the current VAC and/or decision-makers and members of the VAC during the early years (2000–2003), and represent the SADC, ICPs, the PMU, or consultants. During the fifth interview of the first round, a colleague of the invited interviewee joined the discussion.

The second phase of interviews included 27 interviews with 28 key participants who were members of NVACs in four countries: Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. I had to travel to each country for the interviews. Interviewees were selected by the liaisons I had in each country, and in all but one included the NVAC chair. The selection of interviewees in the NVAC countries was thus determined by whoever organised the interviews, usually an NVAC secretary. I only requested that these interviewees signify a good representation of the concerned NVAC and not only consist of high-end officials. These interviews took place over four months in 2013. This part of the research could be equated to Hajer's interviews with key players in discourse analysis.

Appointments were made with all interviewees via e-mail at a time and place that were most convenient for them, either by the country liaisons (in Zimbabwe and Malawi), or directly by me (in all other countries). Interviewees were asked to sign a consent form before participating in the study, as well as a separate permission slip to record the interview (Appendices 7 and 8). These forms were also included in the initial e-

mail to interviewees to provide them with sufficient time to go through the information and come up with clarifying questions. All the selected interviewees agreed to participate in the study and for the interviews to be recorded. They were offered a chance to ask any clarifying questions before signing the documents.

Table 5 indicates the representation of groupings within the VAC policy arrangement. Although these participants were not chosen to be a representative sample, it is nevertheless important to note that governments were the biggest group that participated and that their views will emerge strongly from the data. Some participants belonged to more than one grouping, including: government and an NVAC; ICP and an NVAC; and ICP and the RVAC. This is indicated in Table 6.

Table 5: Representation of groupings within the VAC policy arrangement

Grouping in policy arrangement	Government	NVAC	RVAC	Consultant	ICP
Number of representatives	20	28	3	3	11

Table 6: Double-representation configurations within the policy arrangement

Grouping in policy arrangement	Government & NVAC	ICP & NVAC	ICP & RVAC
Number of representatives	20	7	3

Table 7 provides an overview of all 34 interviews, indicating interviews that were conducted with more than one participant, to which policy arrangement grouping participants belonged, the date of the interview, its duration, and how many sessions the interview consisted of. Although the information sheet stated that interviews would generally take an hour, the shortest interview lasted 13 minutes and the longest 92 minutes. For the purpose of anonymity promised to interviewees in the information and consent form, their names have been substituted with numbers and any reference to specific interviews, will indicate this number instead of a name. I also had to remove all country and ICP-specific NVAC information referring to the interviews, replacing 'ZimVAC' with 'NVAC' for example.

The total amount of interview time was 25 hours and 58 minutes. A service, called the Typing Pool, transcribed the recorded interviews. Before deleting recordings, I read through each transcript whilst listening to the recording to ensure its quality and to re-familiarise myself with the data. I coded and analysed the transcripts using the qualitative data management software, Atlas.ti (the software is discussed in detail in 3.5). I discuss the coding and analysis process in greater detail later in this chapter. It took a total of 41 hours and 24 minutes to code the transcripts.

Five of the 34 interviews were almost unusable, because of the way the VAC system was uncritically promoted as a perfectly functioning body with no challenges except lack of funding. For these interviews I applied discourse analysis more critically, scrutinising the transcripts. Four of these biased interviews were with government officials, and one with an ICP member who used to be a government official. Six interviews were divided into two sessions each due to logistical constraints. The first interview could also not be completed by the second session and was thus supplemented by a questionnaire (Appendix 9). The completed questionnaire was included in Atlas.ti and thus has a separate interview number, which I have replaced with '1 supplemented'.

Table 7: Interviewee numbers, groupings in the VAC policy arrangement, date and duration of interview

Interviewee number	Grouping in policy arrangement	Date of interview	Duration of interview(s)
1	Government and NVAC	9 and 21 May 2013	22min 18sec + 31min 34sec = 53min 52sec
1 supplemented ¹⁷	Government and NVAC	-	-
3	Consultant	20 May 2013	65min 51s
4	ICP and RVAC	20 and 21 May 2013	46min 9sec + 45min 52sec = 92min 01sec
5a and 5b	ICP	20 May 2013	75min 04sec
6	ICP and RVAC	24 May 2013	55min 43sec
7	Consultant	25 and 27 May 2013	25min 8sec + 25min 24sec = 50min 32sec
8	ICP and RVAC	12 June 2013	59min 37sec
9	Government and NVAC	12 June 2013	52min 32sec
10	Government and NVAC	16 July 2013	70min 39sec
11	Government and NVAC	16 July 2013	29min 06sec
12	Government and NVAC	16 July 2013	30min 27sec
13	Consultant and ICP	31 July 2013	74min 07sec
14	Government and NVAC	20 August 2013	35min 04sec
15	Government and NVAC	20 August 2013	46min 56sec
16	Government and NVAC	21 August 2013	46min 33sec
17	ICP and NVAC	21 August 2013	33min 19sec
18	ICP and NVAC	21 August 2013	54min 30sec
19	Government and NVAC	21 August 2013	54min 36sec
20	Government and NVAC	21 August 2013	46min 56sec
21	Government and NVAC	21 August 2013	50min 56sec
22	ICP and NVAC	21 August 2013	13min 46sec
23	Government and NVAC	14 October 2013	48min 47sec
24	ICP and NVAC	14 October 2013	42min 43sec
25	Government and NVAC	15 October 2013	27min 40sec
26	Government and NVAC	15 October 2013	48min 33sec
27	ICP and NVAC	15 October 2013	32min 15sec
28	Government and NVAC	15 October 2013	35min 59sec
29	Government and NVAC	15 October 2013	33min 26sec
30	Government and NVAC	15 October 2013	42min 21sec
31	ICP and NVAC	16 October 2013	42min 34sec
32	ICP and NVAC	16 October 2013	20min 29sec
33a and 33b	Government and NVAC	15 July 2013	74min 19sec
34	Government and NVAC	26 October 2013	16min 47sec

3.4.2.iv Observations

Bruyn (in Yin 2011) states that the term 'participant-observation' was probably first coined by Eduard Lindeman, and that Lohman and Kluckhohn first wrote detailed statements about the method in 1937 and 1940, respectively. As a researcher one can be a participant that observes, an observer that participates, or a mere observer (Yin 2011). The categories a researcher can observe in the research field include the characteristics of individuals such as their gestures and other non-verbal cues; the interactions between individuals; the actions taking place in the field; and the physical context of these observations (Yin 2011).

¹⁷ This was not an interview, but a document sent by interviewee 1 after we were unable to work through the interview guideline after the second interview session on 21 May. The interviewee answered a number of questions and the document was imported to Atlas.ti and analysed as a text.

During the 2011 AOM I realised the value of access to such a meeting and its possible clarifying contribution to an investigation concerning the VAC system. None of the notes from the 2011 meeting can be included in the research findings, as I was then formally introduced as a member of an NGO working in Johannesburg and not as a PhD student and researcher. Nevertheless, the experience proved insightful and useful as a method for possible future investigations. I consequently managed to negotiate access to the AOM at the end of 2013. The RVAA PMU agreed that I could participate in the meeting by presenting my research findings up to that point. I was thus a participant who also observed. During the meeting I took notes, which were also used to inform the coding process in Atlas.ti. As a participant, I also had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions after other participants' presentations. My observations were used to triangulate findings from the document review and semi-structured interviews, and to inform Chapter Six. My notes mostly captured interactions between individuals.

Yin (2011) argues that observations are actually also part of other research methods, as field notes made during interviews also relate to observations of actions, events, and conversations. He states that observations are invaluable, as they are not filtered by what participants might want to tell you, or authors of documents who might have left out valuable information.

3.4.2.v Power chart

Part of my original research design was a NetMap process in collaboration with the RVAA PMU in Gaborone, Botswana to construct an Influence Network Map. NetMap is a participatory interview method that builds on social network analysis, stakeholder mapping, and power mapping. Using materials from a toolkit, participants create a stakeholder map (Schiffer 2007). The map informs an understanding of the implications of the position of individual actors in a social structure. The toolkit is a physical kit containing small figures that represent different actors (Schiffer 2007). These actors are placed on the map and lines are drawn to link the actors. These links reveal how actors are connected or not connected (Schiffer 2007). To reflect the relative power of actors, the figures are placed on different heights of "influence towers"—the higher, the more influential (Schiffer 2007). I would have used the process to map stakeholders and determine their influence within the VAC.

Due to funding constraints, I was unable to travel to Botswana. I attempted to complete the process with the PMU during the AOM in 2013, but the members were unavailable. I then decided to replace the NetMap process with a power chart, as described by Liefferink (2006) as part of interrogating a policy arrangement from the actors and coalitions dimension. The power chart also allowed me to identify key actors and determine their relative power within the VAC, although not being collaborative like the NetMap process. With the inputs of Prof. Drimie, who has worked extensively with the VAC as a consultant, we developed an initial representation of the distribution of power in the VAC. This chart was then e-mailed to key interviewees who reflected a balanced view of the VAC, both expressing successes and challenges in the system. By including the feedback of key interviewees in the power diagram, I aimed to arrive at a clearer depiction of power in the VAC. Of the 17 interviewees who were e-mailed, only four responded. The limited response reduced the representativeness of the diagram, yet it was still useful as an entry point to discuss power within the VAC. The feedback of the four respondents is presented and discussed in Chapter Five.

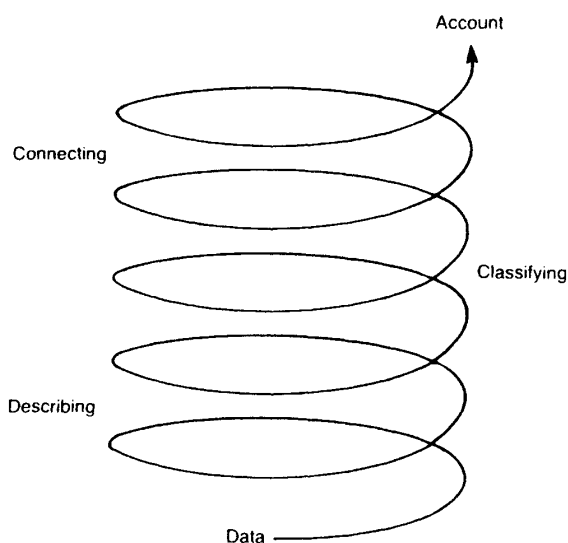
3.5 Analysis of the interview transcripts

You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. And—to extend the aphorism—you can't make an omelette without beating the eggs together. 'Analysis' too involves breaking data down into bits, and then 'beating' the bits together.

(Dey 1993:31)

Dey's metaphor explains that data needs to be broken into smaller parts or codes before it can be added together again in categories. By doing this, the researcher can reveal the characteristics and structure of the data, instead of purely relying on intuition and impressions about the data as a whole (Dey 1993). This is not to say that intuition does not play a vital role in the analysis, but greater rigour and logical procedures can be neglected in qualitative research (Dey 1993). Also, the point of breaking the data and then reconstructing it is an attempt to describe the how, what, and why of the events and objects that the data is describing, instead of merely describing the data (1993). It is essential to start the analysis by describing the data, but the analysis will then in turn lead to further descriptions. The second description is a discussion of the connections between the concepts and categories of the broken-down data: "The core of qualitative analysis lies in these related processes of describing phenomena, classifying it, and seeing how our concepts interconnect" (Dey 1993:31). This process is iterative, meaning that describing, classifying, and connecting take place repeatedly until a saturation point is reached (Dey 1993). A spiral is a good representation of the analytical process (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Qualitative research as an iterative spiral



Source: Dey (1993:55)

Although this spiral can be used for guidance during analysis, there is no recipe for it: "Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance yes. But no recipe" (Patton 2002:432). "The process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms, but it is fundamentally a nonmathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions. Qualitative research findings are inductively derived from this data" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:121).

At this point it is also important to distinguish between inductive and deductive analysis, as presented by Hsieh and Shannon (2005). Inductive analysis should be used to describe a phenomenon when existing theory is limited. It is characterised by an avoidance of preconceived categories and a commitment to immersion in the data to allow insights to emerge. Deductive analysis is used to validate or complete existing theories. It is characterised by the application of preconceived categories. As discussed later, I applied inductive and deductive analyses.

For my research I used a Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) programme called Atlas.ti (Frieze 2014). The acronym stands for Archiv fur Technik, Lebenswelt, AlltagsSprache, which means Archive of Technology, Lifeworld and Everyday Language (Frieze 2014). The first part of the name bears on the idea that the world can be mapped by an archive of meaningful documents, whilst the 'ti' stands for text interpretation (Frieze 2014). There are also other programmes such as QSR Nvivo, HyperRESEARCH and MAXqda (formerly winMAX). The reason for using Atlas.ti was that it was the first CAQDAS programme I was introduced to and I have completed two separate trainings to use the programme. Regardless of the programme used, it is important to note that the programme is merely a tool for supporting the process of qualitative data analysis and cannot actually analyse the data (Frieze 2014):

The hard work in coding data is intellectual, not mechanical...[researchers] must remain alert to the possibility that coding data with a well-designed computer program can become an end in itself; highlighting sections of text with combinations of colours or sorting and re-sorting half-coded notes can easily create the comforting appearance of progress.

(Dohan & Sanchez-Jankowski 1998:482)

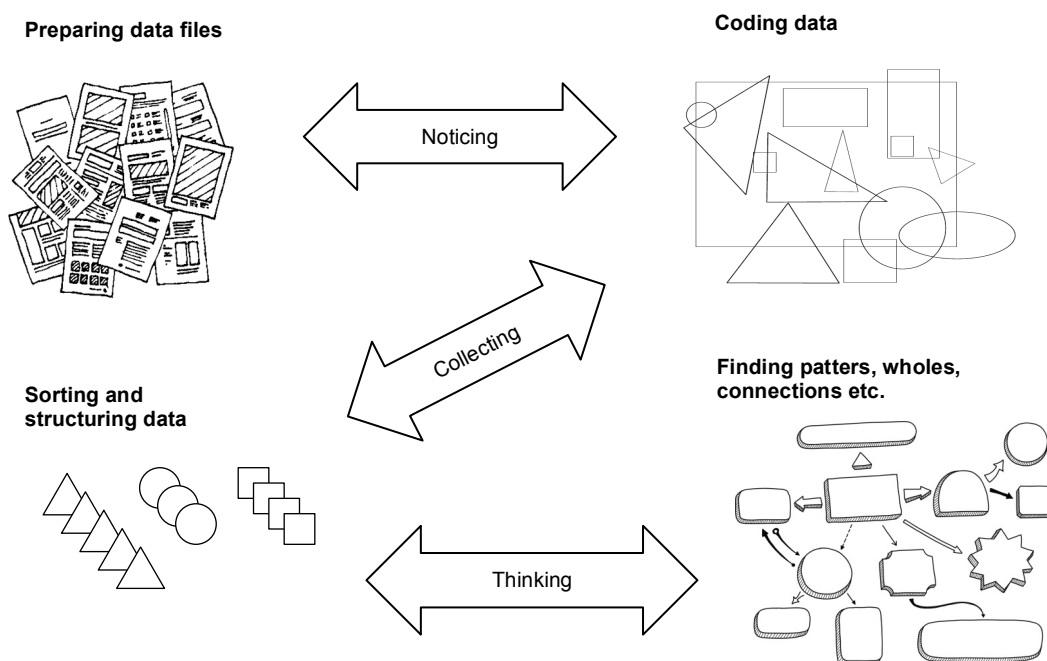
Frieze (2014) offers a computer-assisted qualitative analysis method called NCT: noticing, collecting and thinking about the data. This process is also iterative and closely relates to Dey's spiral. The noticing part of the method refers to marking and naming interesting things in the data, also referred to as coding (Frieze 2014). The collecting part of NCT refers to collecting similar things in the data by either renaming codes to fit a larger group of things, or grouping codes under families (Frieze 2014). Thinking takes place throughout analysis, but also specifically refers to noticing patterns, wholes, connections and typologies in the data (Frieze 2014). Figure 14 shows a simple projection of the NCT model.

One would start off the process by preparing data files, then noticing interesting things and starting the coding process. During coding, one would need to keep noticing new things and rework codes. Sorting and structuring the data involves collecting similar things in the data, yet still reading original data files and re-coding if necessary. To identify patterns in the data, one would need to think about things, but also reread original documents and querying the sorted and structured data. The process is thus highly integrated and iterative (Frieze 2014).

There are two phases to coding data (Frieze 2014). The descriptive phase concerns exploring the data and noticing interesting things during first-stage coding. The coding process will need a few rounds of noticing and collecting until all the data is coded and the coding schema is fully developed. During this process, the researcher should be making comments that could aid later thinking. Once the data is fully coded, the conceptual phase can start in which various analytical tools are used to ask questions about the data (Frieze

2014). During this phase, key relations between aspects in the data begin to emerge. “The ultimate aim is to integrate all of the findings and to gain a coherent understanding of the phenomenon studied” (Frieze 2014: 18).

Figure 14: A simple projection of the NCT model



Source: Adapted from Frieze (2014:15)

Ideally I should have integrated the official VAC documents, interview transcripts and observation notes into one hermeneutic unit in Atlas.ti. Coding and analysing the data as a whole to deliver an integrated account of the findings from various data sources would then have been possible. Unfortunately I was unable to obtain the software until mid-2013. I thus only analysed the interview transcripts using Atlas.ti. The VAC document review was done manually. The observation notes were, however, used to help develop the code schema. With that said, dividing the different sources of data into separate analytical phases has greatly benefitted the refinement of consecutive phases.

I used both inductive and deductive approaches for coding. The PAA greatly assisted in setting up a framework for data gathering and analysis, and thus represented the deductive part of my research. Reading through the transcripts, and especially the observation notes, proved useful for identifying overlooked themes and thus represented the inductive aspect of the coding process. I also moved in between the two approaches continuously, giving up certain predetermined themes and adding new emerging ones, and vice versa.

The coding process took place in two waves. I completed the initial coding in January 2014. After writing up some of the findings, I realised that the retrieval part of the analysis was proving challenging, and so attended another Atlas.ti workshop at the African Doctoral Academy in June 2014. The facilitator of this workshop felt that although my codes were useful, a better structure of the families would deliver deeper

insight into the data. I thus refined my codes and the family structures for a second wave of coding, which followed in July 2014. I also started retrieving information during this time, looking for patterns and connections in the data. Starting the thinking process as I was refining the coding schema allowed me to think critically about which codes to include and which to delete. A total of 229 codes were identified and categorised into 23 families. This is a rather large number, yet 68 of these codes are linked to only a few quotations—10 or fewer. The reason for keeping them in the schema is that they represent something significant in the data, even though they are not frequently discussed. Examples of such codes include only one interviewee referring to the exposure aspect of vulnerability (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). The fact that only one interviewee mentioned this is significant. It indicates that this is not a general understanding of vulnerability within the VAC. Another significant finding is of two interviewees discussing the fact that vulnerability has become “the new normal” and so they are of the viewpoint that governments are used to managing vulnerability, rather than addressing it (Int. 5 and 33 to Landman 2013).

Box 2 shows an extract of codes related to actor behaviours, with their frequency, related families and definitions. It is also possible to see the merging process between ‘collaboration’ and ‘negotiation’. The latter had only two relevant quotes, which could easily be retrieved under the former. For a full list of codes with families, definitions and merging histories, see Appendix 10. Appendix 11 contains a list of the 23 families.

Box 2: Extract of two codes with families and definitions

B Collaboration

Created: 2014-01-23 15:13:28 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:44:35

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 40

Comment: actors working together to achieve a common goal.

Stakeholders working together to conduct VAA work.

*** Merged Comment from: B Negotiation (2014-08-27T15:44:34) ***

When consensus is reached only after a period of negotiation - trying to reach a middle-ground.

B Communication

Created: 2014-07-09 18:59:17 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-19 14:39:32

Families (2): Power/resources, Actors/networks

Quotations: 35

Comment: Sharing information in the VAC system.

The manner in which codes were categorised into families already started the thinking process and identified key themes. The four dimension of the PAA informed some of the families I used for the analysis and included actors/coalitions, rules of the game, power/resources, and discourses. Relevant codes were categorised within these families, thus indicating key issues relating to each PAA dimension. Other emerging families included for example context, structures and vulnerability drivers. Codes could also belong to more than one family. Once the data was fully coded and categorised I started the retrieval process. One of the most basic retrieval functions in Atlas.ti is retrieving salient quotations by using individual codes. An example is given in Box 3 of quotes retrieved for the code, ‘PR Funding’. The retrieval process delivers the frequency of the code’s application (189) and the quotes linked to it. For each quote, the source (interview number), overlapping codes, and their families are also identified.

Another useful retrieval process I used was to look for co-occurring codes. For example, if I wanted to establish if there were any challenges with regards to funding in SAVAC, I would do a search where the codes 'SAVAC' and 'PR Funding' were coded together. I also made use of Primary Document (PD) tables, which enabled me to look at the link between themes and actors. PDs were also categorised into families including the RVAC, individual NVACs, ICPs, governments, and consultants. I was thus able to determine how themes are linked to these actors. PD tables allowed me to place these document families in rows or columns, with the codes or code families I selected on the opposite axis. The tables would then show the frequency of the related codes in each document or document family. Figure 15 shows a screenshot of how Table 8 was created.

Box 3: Extract of code 'PR Funding' with linked quotations

Report: 189 quotation(s) for 1 code

HU: The PhD
 File: [\[\\psf\Home\Dropbox\PhD Steps\Step 7 Analysis\The PhD.hpr7\]](#)
 Edited by: Super
 Date/Time: 2014-08-27 19:14:22

Mode: quotation content, memos and hyperlinks
PR Funding

P 1: Interview 1.docx - 1:34 [So now we feel before we even ..] (459:459) (Super)
 Codes: [A SAVAC - Family: Actors/networks] [PD Authority - Family: Power/resources] [PR Funding - Family: Power/resources]
 No memos
 So now we feel before we even go ahead and do certain things, let us get the approval of the seniors...then we move forward knowing that we have their blessings because at the end of the day we want a situation whereby they can't we actually commit its own funding to this SAVAC activities.

P 3: Interview 2.docx - 3:88 [Ja because of those debates th..] (579:579) (Super)
 Codes: [M Method promotion - Family: Rules of the game] [Multi-agency nature - Family: Actors/networks] [PR Funding - Family: Power/resources] [Timeframes - Family: Rules of the game] [VM Mandate - Families (3): Mandates, Rules of the game, VAC]
 No memos
 Ja because of those debates that were going on. This organisation brings funding, I want my methodology. This one brings funding, I want my methodology so even VACs themselves were getting confused into money by trying to find direction on which one to take that AVAC. So there were those discussions that really took a lot of years to really agree.

P 5: Interview 4.docx - 5:58 [R1: Uhm in a case like climate..] (355:358) (Super)
 Codes: [A Government - Family: Actors/networks] [A ICPs - Family: Actors/networks] [Agriculture - Family: Food security] [Climate Change - Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers] [PR Funding - Family: Power/resources] [PR Technical support - Family: Power/resources] [PS Government structures (place of embeddedment) - Families (2): Power/resources, Structures]
 No memos
 R1: Uhm in a case like climate change, it's a new field for many. It's, it's uncharted territory and uhm it's often the case that, that governments need support from outside. it may in terms of technical capacity. it may be in terms of funds...

In Table 8 it is for example clear that ICPs most often discussed the influence of political contexts on vulnerability information. It was also the most pertinent issues for the RVAC and consultants. It is also interesting to note that governments most often discussed contextual issues relating to scale and implementing context-specific programmes. Although a less important issue for governments, it was also the group that most often discussed the influence of economical factors on vulnerability information.

As also noted earlier, although these participants were not chosen to be a representative sample, it is nevertheless important to note that governments were the biggest group that participated, and that their views will emerge strongly from the data. Interestingly, ICPS—a relatively small group—spoke of contextual issues most frequently.

Figure 15: Screenshot of extracting a PD table in Atlas.ti

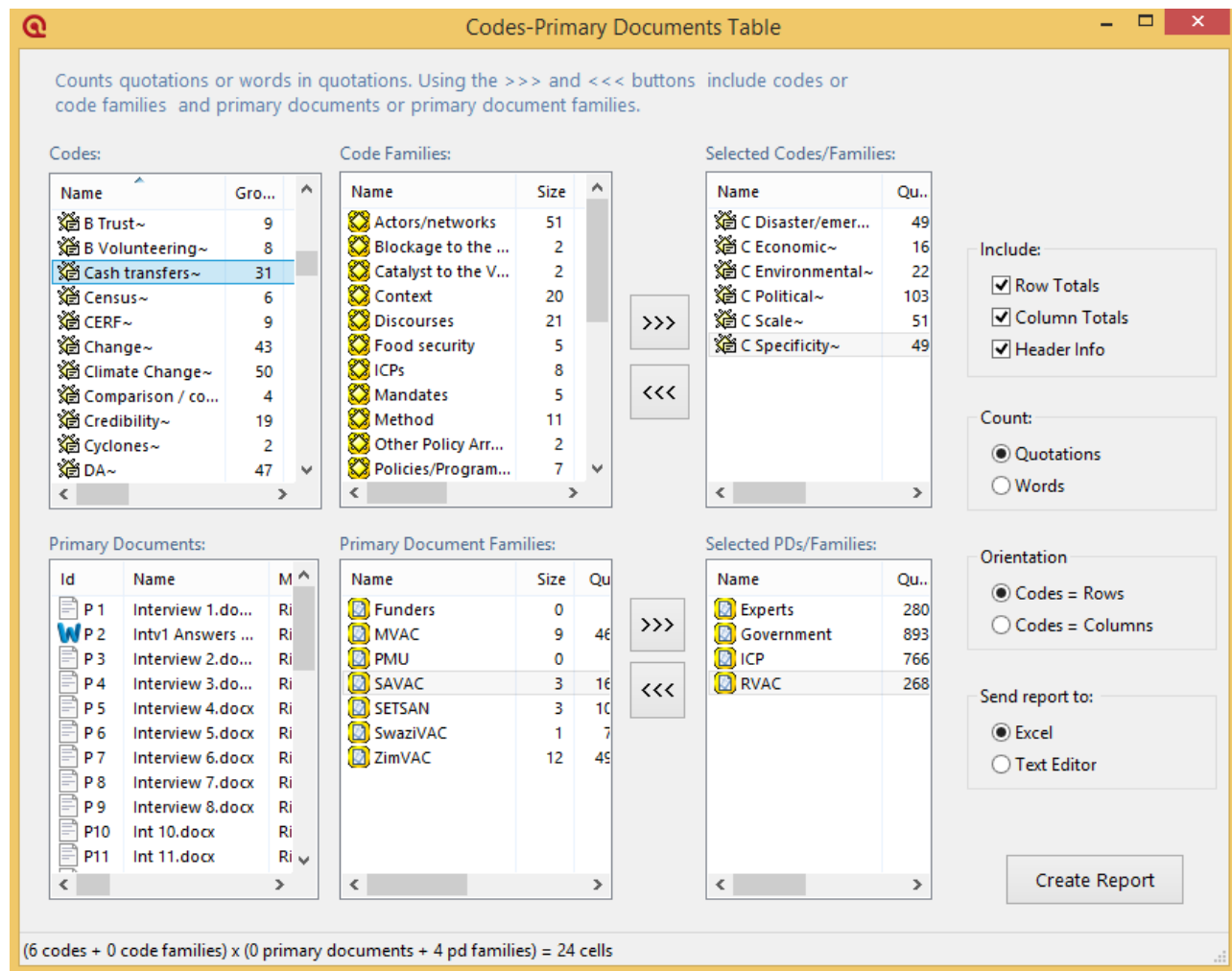


Table 8: The frequency of context-related codes in interviews with different actors

	Consultants	Governments	ICPs	RVAC	TOTALS
C Disaster/emergency	6	7	38	16	67
C Economic	3	7	6	0	16
C Environmental	1	10	11	1	23
C Political	19	19	67	36	141
C Scale	9	31	12	2	54
C Specificity	1	34	14	1	50
TOTALS	39	108	148	56	351

3.6 Limitations of the study

A major shortcoming of the document review was the difficulty of accessing documents. Analysed documents were downloaded from this link: <http://www.sadc.int/fanr/aims/rvaa/index.php> and the links provided on the page. During the research process, this link started redirecting to a new SADC website. In order to reach the VAC page, which had been relabelled as the RVAA programme, one needs to click on the RVAA link to the left of the screen to reach this address: <http://www.sadc.int/sadc-secretariat/directorates/office-deputy-executive-secretary-regional-integration/food-agriculture-natural->

resources/regional-vulnerability-assessment-analysis-programme-rvaa/. At the time of writing this thesis, there were even fewer documents available on the new website than I was able to retrieve from the old one. During interviews participants mentioned that a new RVAA website was underway; the lack of documents may therefore have been due to a clean-up process driven by the programme. Some interviewees also mentioned that due to a lack of a central VAC repository, except for hard copies of some reports circulating between users, a significant amount of documents created by the VAC only existed on the computers of those who wrote and edited them. The only documents currently available on the website are official RVAA programme documents, and three new studies: an impact study (described by one consultant as being too careful in its critique), a capacity review and an analysis of climate change and livelihoods. Some of the documents I used for the analysis, such as the AOM and synthesis reports are listed on the website, but have no hyperlinks connecting them to the actual documents. Most of the documents I reviewed are no longer available on the new website. I was also able to retrieve two country-specific annual reviews from the NVACs I visited. This complicates access to key VAA documents for policy makers. Policy makers trying to access these documents using the new website would do so in vain.

It is important to note that the sampling of NVACs for the case study was never intended to be a representative sample of the VAC system, but offered entry points and valuable insights to the larger system. It would have produced richer data if I were able to visit all the NVACs, yet time and resource constraints prevented me from doing so. Some policies that have been written using VAC outputs might have been missed due to the sampling of only five NVACs. Challenges during the interviews included that I had limited time with some interviewees, as they had other responsibilities or were travelling. In five of the interviews I felt as though I was unable to break through smokescreens depicting perfectly functioning NVACs, yet was able to extract valuable findings by applying discourse analysis during the coding process. It is important to note here that interviewees may have honestly considered their NVACs to be perfectly functioning. The language barrier in Mozambique meant that I was only able to interview three candidates. There seemed to have been a misunderstanding with the arrangements and I arrived a week too early. I also struggled to interview these three candidates, as they were Portuguese and only spoke limited English as a third language. Nevertheless, one interviewee in particular made the trip to Maputo worthwhile. He was a policy maker and although the language barrier was still a challenge, he was committed to using descriptions and hand gestures until I understood what he was answering. He offered valuable insight into SETSAN.

My observation during the 2013 AOM was one of the most invaluable methods of data collection. It allowed me to observe first-hand the power relations I had been suspecting after the document review and semi-structured interviews. A setback during the meeting, however, was my own presentation. I presented a strong critique of the process of formalising NVACs within SADC member governments and those holding considerable positions of power in the VAC disagreed with my analysis. It might have contributed to an unwillingness to participate in the NetMap process and the weak response to the power chart I e-mailed to key interviewees, including all those in central power (see Figure 21 in Chapter Six). Nevertheless, taking such a strong stance also motivated others to come and speak to me in private, to provide feedback on my presentation and make suggestions for further investigations.

As explained earlier, I was unable to do the NetMap process due to a lack of response from those invited to participate in it. Instead I opted for Liefferink's power chart and used e-mail to communicate with key interviewees. I first e-mail was sent out, inviting feedback from respondents. Three additional reminders were also sent to participants. In the end, only four of the 17 people replied. Two were consultants, one a government official, and the other a member of an ICP. The participation in this exercise was poor, but I still included it in the findings in Chapter Five.

Lastly, a comprehensive financial analysis of VAC resource flows was not possible. The only insight into resource flows was gained through the document review, which included two AOM reports from 2009 and 2010 that indicated work plans and budgets for 2010 and 2011.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview, justification, and description of the qualitative research design and methods used to answer the overarching research question. I explored how a qualitative case study design complemented the PAA and why discourse analysis, document reviews, semi-structured qualitative interviews, observations, and e-mail correspondence were the most appropriate methods to inform the case study. I also explained how these various methods informed the different chapter in this thesis. This chapter also outlined the boundaries of the VAC system and its context. For each applied method, I provided a detailed description of the research process. An overview of the analysis of data also included explanations of key retrieval processes used in Atlas.ti. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the study's limitations.

Chapter Four: Historical Vulnerability Assessment Committee narratives

4.1 Introduction

As defined in Chapter Three, the boundaries of the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) policy arrangement contain the bodies making up the VAC: the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR); the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC); the National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs); and the Regional Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme Management Unit (PMU). The context of the VAC is limited to manifestations of influences that bear on the VAC within the SADC region, whether influenced from outside or inside the region. This chapter presents contextualised historical narratives of the VAC policy arrangement since before its inception in 1999. Key contextual events and the possible links these events have to the emergence and evolution of the VAC policy arrangement are outlined. The challenge here is to distinguish between contextual and inherent factors that contributed to the establishment and evolution of the VAC policy arrangement. This chapter focuses more on the contextual events, yet includes inherent VAC manifestations and evolutions. By integrating contextual and inherent narratives, more specific discussions around the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) dimensions in Chapters Five to Seven can be developed. Figure 16 offers a conceptualisation of some of the links between the contextual factors and the actual VAC policy arrangement; it does not exhaust all the links discussed in the chapter.

This chapter starts with a theoretical discussion of context in the PAA, drawing on the Laswellian commitments the PAA is built on. I also refer back to two neglected governance dimensions as discussed in Chapter Two: the character of ecological processes that governance seeks to influence and how these processes interact with and are co-constructed by governance, and the issue of risk, uncertainty and incertitude more broadly. The first is explored in 4.2 and 4.3.1, and the latter in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2. Findings for this chapter draw on in-depth interviews, as well as the literature and official VAC document reviews.

4.2 Context in the PAA

Within the field of policy science, the PAA was built on three Laswellian commitments: contextuality, problem orientation, and diversity (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). This chapter specifically relates to what Laswell implies by contextuality. According to Torgerson (1985) Laswell finds "...such contextual orientation indispensable to the conduct of rational inquiry, and he [Laswell] urged the use of contextual-configurative analysis in the development of a policy science profession" (Torgerson 1985:242). Laswell advocates the analysis of policies as rooted in and constructed by social contexts. Laswell's "contextuality" refers to social and political contexts, but is not specific about ecological contexts. It can thus be assumed that Laswell is not referring to context in its totality including social, political, economic, and ecological contextual factors; however for the purpose of this research, ecological factors are also considered.

The PAA claims to be contextual (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004; Leroy & Arts 2006), because the "...key assumption is that policy decisions and policy making processes within policy arrangements (referring to the ordering of a specific policy field in terms of agents, resources, rules, and discourses) are the result of the interplay of contextual processes of structural political and social change on the one hand (political

modernisation) and problem-orientated renewal of policy making by agents in day-to-day practices on the other (policy innovation)” (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004:341). The PAA, drawing on Laswellian commitments, thus assumes that a governing subsystem with policy agents in day-to-day practices manifest social and political dynamics in the contexts it is governing. This research demonstrates how ecological dynamics have also contributed to the establishment of the VAC policy arrangement and its evolution.

Leach et al. (2007) agree with Laswell that to address the complex dynamics of Socio-ecological Systems (SESs) through policy processes, governance needs to be “responsive to the dynamic complexity of different contexts” (Leach et al. 2007:14). “The very different trajectories in different places also suggest that understanding emergent governance processes needs an approach that is embedded in history and context” (Leach et al. 2007:15). They argue that globally these contextual dynamics, which challenge the notion of stable states in a stable world order, include large Asian countries such as India and China being integrated into global markets, growing violence and insecurity amongst regions and countries (e.g. the Israel-Palestine conflict, the War in Afghanistan, and the alleged 2014 coup in Lesotho to name a few), the dynamics of disease (e.g. the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa) and changing ecological contexts (e.g. climate change and environmental degradation) (Leach et al. 2007). Clearly contextual dynamics could emerge from ground level up such as coups, or take on a top-down nature such as the integration of large countries into global markets. Leach et al. (2007) argue that new governance modes have been neglecting the character of ecological processes that governance seeks to influence and how these processes interact with and are co-constructed by governance (see Chapter One). To govern effectively, it is essential that governing bodies, whether governments or governance arrangements, turn their attention to the history and context of policy problems, including ecological aspects.

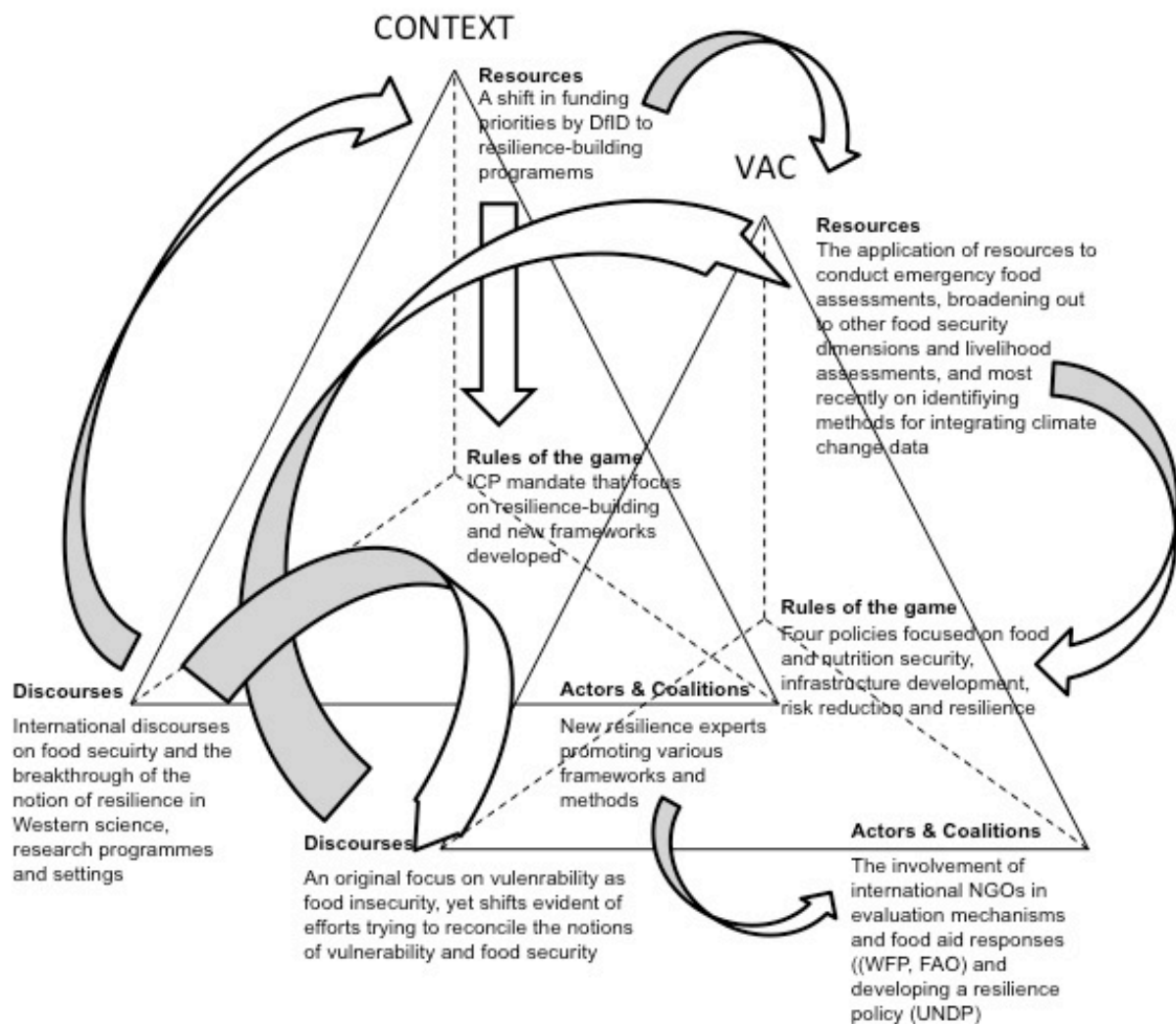
4.3 The VAC in context

This section aims to contextualise the VAC system, outlining its historical narrative and the contextual factors that motivated the formation and evolution of the policy arrangement. The links between some aspects of the VAC policy arrangement, and the context within which it is embedded, are demonstrated in Figure 16. Not all the links between contextual factors and internal developments discussed in this chapter are included in the image. As explained in Chapter Two, contextual factors emerge through the PAA dimensions and will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Five to Seven. Contextual and internal factors that contributed to the establishment and evolution of the VAC are split in Box 5, after the discussion of a number of key narratives.

There may well be as many narratives of the history and context of the VAC as there are people who have participated in its activities. Nevertheless, there are numerous overlaps between these narratives, and a number of key themes seem to run throughout. Here I present two narratives. The first narrative is an original account of the foundation of the VAC, as told by a founding RVAC member. This foundation narrative is supplemented by accounts of other interviewees to corroborate contextual factors that have contributed to the establishment of the VAC. These contextual factors have also compounded vulnerability in the region. The second narrative derives from a document review of key VAC documents and presents a more formal account of the VAC’s development from its inception in 1999 to a synthesis report in 2011. Finally, I present two contextual issues that interviewees raised and that were not reflected in either of the two narratives,

namely scale and specificity. An explanation of how these historical narratives were drawn out is contained in Chapter Three.

Figure 16: Links between contextual events and the VAC policy arrangements



4.3.1 The foundation of the VAC

Although the VAC was only established in 1999, there were some contextual events preceding its formation that continue to influence how the VAC frames vulnerability and conduct its activities. Box 4 contains an original account of the events leading up to the formation of the VAC, as told by one of the first RVAC members. The text reads as a narrative because I have removed clarifying questions asked during the interview. Minor changes to the original account of the interviewee are indicated in square brackets.

Although the box presents only one person's account, other interviewees corroborated parts of the narrative. Key discussed elements of the narrative were repeated by others, except the claim that the VAC system was supposed to supplement research done by the Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU). As reported in the more formal narrative in the next section, the REWU originally formed part of the RVAC. Nevertheless, it seems that the REWU has become less prominent and funded since the establishment of the VAC. This could be an interesting area for future investigations. Other interviewees' accounts confirmed this

interviewee's claim that the VAC formation as part of negotiations between International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) and the SADC to establish a common platform for regional food security assessments. This is an important finding that reflects the intention at the inception of the VAC to create a platform to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity around food security in the region, possibly caused by parallel operating multi-sectoral national administrations, and a variety of different frameworks and methods to assessing vulnerability. After Box 4 I present a summary of this narrative, highlighting the key aspects that are unpacked in Chapters Five (discourses), Six (actors and power) and Seven (institutional rules).

Box 4: A founding RVAC member's account of events leading up to the VAC formation

Int. 8 to Landman (2013):

I guess what I should say basically is that the genesis of it comes from the fact that SADC as an institution had set up this Regional Early Warning System and the way [it] was structured was based on a model which FAO¹⁸ had come up with and so it was initially implemented as an FAO project. It was called Regional Early Warning System... At that time SADC was disaggregated. Each country was given a responsibility to co-ordinate. Food security was coordinated in Zimbabwe... They had the coordination role in terms of implementing any program that had anything to do with food security and agriculture. They were the ones responsible for writing up project proposals to donors going to various fora to try and solicit funding for certain areas that were identified within a SADC setting to say these are regional issues that need to be coordinated at regional level – Early Warning for Food Security was one of those programs.

...we had looked basically at national level demand supply issues. You know if you, I don't know what your background is, but if your background is in food security you will know that in the early years there was talk of self-sufficiency. So you know there was a drive for countries to be self-sufficient. Mainly as a result also of the politics that were on going at that time. You know, countries could not depend on importations. South Africa was an apartheid state and there were ...sanctions, ... so South Africa couldn't be depended on. The other countries were forced to find ways by which they could maintain their food security without having to depend on South Africa.

One of the issues actually was the strategic grain reserves. A lot of the countries they were supposed to have a strategic grain reserve that would allow them to keep a certain amount of grain should South Africa decide to block its borders. The politics around that time determined what the views were in terms of what needs to be done. So we were looking mainly at that national level of self-sufficiency. The methodologies that we had available to us did not allow us to look beyond say district level availability issues. The methodologies that we had available to us did not allow us to look into – we were [only] able to determine levels of shortages. Maybe down to the district level, but we didn't have methods that allowed us to then say who actually is going to face this shortage.

Over the years we had partners that were sitting in Harare, because Harare [the capital of Zimbabwe] was the regional centre [for food security]. So you had people like the UN¹⁹ agencies, international NGOs²⁰ and other programmes, even such as FEWSNET²¹, Save the Children, FRC, and these agencies, who had the responsibility of actually doing the response, had the need to find out exactly who are we supposed to be responding to. Through their headquarters and through other means, they started introducing methodologies to do vulnerability assessment that allowed them to go to the household level so that they [could] dig up and find out exactly [who needed assistance]. [For example] at a national level you [could] say the countries' [had] an import requirement of so much, and perhaps maybe commercially the government or the commercial sector [could] meet so much, but there still [remained] a gap that [needed] to be filled by food humanitarian assistance, but to whom [were] we [supposed to] direct that humanitarian assistance? So all of these agencies were coming up with their methods. You had Save the Children doing their HEA²² approach, others like WFP²³ and FEWSNET using [the] indicator approach – many different kinds of approaches.

To make matters more complicated, the NGO sectors in each country [did] not [have] national level coverage. So for example, if you go to Zimbabwe, you [would] find that the government of Zimbabwe [would] allocate certain districts to certain NGOs. You [would] find ... in a certain district, a Save the Children presence, and they were doing their own HEA approach. Another district to the west of the country there's maybe OXFAM²⁴, and they're using their own approach. So now you ask yourself, when these two agencies come and sit together, Save the Children says I've done my assessment and we find that there are 200 000 people in Bikita that are food insecure. OXFAM says after my assessment we found there are 800 000 people. [Those are two findings] you can't compare, because the methods that they've used are

¹⁸ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

¹⁹ The United Nations.

²⁰ Non-governmental Organisations.

²¹ The Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

²² The Household Economy Approach.

²³ The World Food Programme.

²⁴ The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief.

incomparable.

To make matters worse these [were] NGOs. In the countries you have government institutions whose responsibility it is, actually, to be the ones to go to the donors and say now we are appealing for this and that. So you find that the government's Early Warning System did not have this methodology or these tools ...to actually assess to that level of detail. All we could do was come up with food balance sheets. Noting that the food balance sheets [were] needed, a complementary tool to allow people to then dig deeper into the areas and households [for exact details would have been useful. With this matter, governments required] some kind of assistance.

There was a decision taken that these Early Warning Units needed to incorporate vulnerability assessment methodologies within their basket of tools...The way [the Early Warning Units] had been set up in the different countries... there was a regional unit, which was providing regional oversight to all the units. So you had the people sitting at the region... responsible directly to somebody in an Early Warning Unit in each country, so they did regular backstopping. Each country sent in monthly reports to the region using a certain structure that had been agreed on. Using methods that had been agreed on, so that everything was comparable across the region. The regional office compiled a regional report for dissemination to whoever partners. That was the system. So what was missing... was the vulnerability analysis side...

Vulnerability analysis is not a [single] sector – it's a multi-sectoral issue, so it requires different kinds of expertise. Now you could not co-opt one individual and say: "You are going to sit here and cover the vulnerability analysis side of our work" like you would with the national food balance sheet... [For the balance sheet] you could just get an economist to train them, how to do that and you say: "Ok, your responsibility is to do and to update the national balance sheet". But for vulnerability analysis you couldn't do that. You needed a whole network of people to come sit together and actually go out and do this analysis... It involves the ministries of health, agriculture, meteorology, disaster risk, reduction units, all of these people have a role to play in doing vulnerability analysis, because it's not strictly just looking at [food availability]...there a lot of different indicators that have to be taken into account over and above how much food was produced and how much food people need. You need to understand their whole livelihoods and livelihoods involve all of these sectors.

So that was the reason why [the VAC] had to be formed in a... network, which we eventually called a committee. So Vulnerability Assessment Committees were formed to complement what the National Early Warning Units were doing and the idea at that time was that these National Early Warning Units would actually act as a secretariat for these Vulnerability Assessment Committees. In some countries it worked like that, ...but in most countries it actually ended up not working. They ended up just being two processes with staff from National Early Warning Unit participating in the NVACs, whenever there was an activity that needed to be done, but with somebody else now ...elected as the chair of the NVAC, really taking control and the...secretarial role that we had hoped would remain with the Early Warning Units, who we actually were thinking this is something that's going to feed into that to complement the product... it didn't work like that.

The same situation where the VACs were really growing and gaining more popularity and the National Early Warning Units sort of taking a step back and really some of them not really being as supported as they used to be when the SADC project was still on going. The unfortunate part of this is actually that at some stage when SADC restructured, they decided to cut out funding to support the National Early Warning Units. A decision was taken that all governments should support their own National Early Warning Units. Initially what used to happen [before the SADC restructuring] was that each country would set aside a certain amount of money, put it into a SADC account at regional level, that money was then used to run trainee workshops for Early Warning Units, to support backstopping visits by the regional experts to go to each of those countries to help them advocate at policy level, [with whatever needed] to be done to improve those Early Warning Units, but all that fell away when the restructuring happened.

[The National Early Warning Units] worked very, very well. If you speak to anybody about Early Warning Units ... who has been with the system for quite a while, they would tell you that when they actually tried to argue with the SADC leadership to say: "Why are you stopping us from ... setting this money aside to put into a fund to keep this thing going?" Because you know [for] most governments it's difficult, once money is in treasury, it can be used for anything, but in this way they knew that once this money is deposited into the SADC account, it's going to be strictly used to improve early warning. It was in the restructuring process, the agreements that they did... [Now] SADC member states ...only make one lump sum payment annually to SADC. It is [then] up to SADC to decide how that money is used within its various sectors and directorates. So in this instance the, before the aggregation of SADC, there were a lot of small payments that governments were making to regional institutions to help their national institutions like this Early Warning system...this money was determined on an annual basis to say this year the budget to run the regional Early Warning system will be so much, divided by 12, then each country pays so much. And countries were very happy actually to pay. Most of them were paying up, because that was not a huge amount of money, but right now what SADC...

[At this point the recorder stopped functioning. I stopped the interview and started a few moments later].

So anyway, I think I was at the point where I was explaining how the VACs came to be born, and actually I think I jumped a step, because what happened is ... there were these different initiatives by different organisations to try to get at the grasslevel issues of who was requiring what and how much. So, because [of] what we had as SADC and as national governments, [it] did not allow us to do this. It's something that was evolving: Trying to understand how much people were requiring in terms of humanitarian food assistance. With SADC having a co-ordination role and with these regional

[food security-related] NGOs also sitting in Harare at that time, a decision was taken to get people to sit around a table and discuss ways in which people should be working together, because all of these people coming up with their figures, using different methods was not really making for good working relationships. There was always a dispute of... Save the Children is saying this, FEWSNET is saying that, and another person is saying something else, so who should the donors believe? And because SADC at that time had this very strong coordination role, they felt it was their responsibility to make sure that we are speaking in one voice.

If a member state [requires] assistance, it should be through [the] voice of SADC, not through the voice of Save the Children for example, and so SADC needs to take leadership of that, so that any NGO that wants to actually be involved in a response in a particular country should actually work through that co-ordination of SADC. So all of these NGOs and the UN agencies as well, were brought in as part of the regional level committee. This was replicated in the countries as well, because the work actually was happening in countries. At the regional level, there was just oversight in planning...

I think why this thing just took off was because of the crisis of the early 2000s. It became really very urgent that SADC, through its structures was able to actually do this analysis and assessment, and come up with a consolidated consensus report about what [was] actually going on in each of the countries. This was important, because we had agencies like say WFP whose responsibility it is to actually do humanitarian food assistance programs. So you didn't want a situation where WFP was saying... in Swaziland 230 000 are needing food and yet the SADC assessment process is saying no, in Swaziland it's actually 500 000. There was a need for people really to come together and sit around a table and actually ... work together... bring together all these different kinds of analytical and assessment tools that each agency had. All the experts would sit around a table and discuss how this [could] be rationalised, and actually be used by all the agencies so that all agencies are comfortable using those particular tools and all agencies feel that their information or data requirements are catered for in those tools. Basically then that was the main reason really for forming these committees and the reason why they had to actually be coordinated at SADC, at a regional level and coordinated by the governments at a national level... those processes are with the government at that [national] level and ownership is with SADC at a regional level.

According to Interviewee 8, the SADC was disaggregated before the launch of the VAC²⁵, with different member states tending to different areas of regional concern. This early SADC structure reflects an organisational approach with different member states tending to different sectoral domains, working parallel to each other. Difficulties with cooperation between member states tending to different domains related to vulnerability would have hindered consensus and a more comprehensive approach to address uncertainties around regional food insecurity.

Food security issues were coordinated from Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. One of the projects run from Harare was the establishment of the REWU, responsible for national demand-supply issues and advising countries when food stocks dropped too low. Measurements were thus mainly concerned with food production or the availability dimension of food security. The aim was to establish self-sufficiency through grain reserves. It became clear that knowing the statistics of food shortages were not sufficient to target those who were affected by these shortages. ICPs and NGOs thus began vulnerability assessments to identify those who required humanitarian assistance. Vulnerability was thus considered the human aspect of food security—linking food shortages to people in need of assistance. This is a vital finding, as the understanding of vulnerability within the VAC was born out of the earlier discourses relating to food security (further explored in Chapter Five). Unfortunately the assessments from different partners, applying different methods at the time, produced conflicting outcomes, which is a good illustration of earlier confrontations with uncertainty. Furthermore, these partners were essentially taking over governments' responsibility, which illustrates conflicting power dynamics. In order to establish a platform where stakeholders could come and work together to reach consensus (an attempt to deal with uncertainty), for the SADC to resume a coordinating role, and for national governments to take the lead on issues of food insecurity in their respective countries (addressing power imbalances), the VAC was launched. In the early 2000s, food security emergencies further consolidated the need for the VAC. Interviewee 8 did not mention anything

²⁵ For a full historical timeline of the SADC, visit <http://www.sadc.int/about-sadc/overview/history-and-treaty/>

about informing national policies, although it may be because the narrative dealt specifically with the VAC focus in its earlier years. The interviewee also alluded to the fact that the understanding of food security has broadened beyond food availability to access and livelihoods, which is further dealt with in Chapter Five.

Two contextual factors are thus highlighted by this interviewee's account. The motivation for the establishment of the VAC was rooted in emergency food security and it was to create a platform for better cooperation and consensus (suggesting challenges created by multi-sectoral structures that hinder consensus). Other interviewees also mentioned that the emergence of the VAC system was rooted in crises: "I'm sure you know the genesis of it? How it came about? It ...responded to a crisis" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013); "...that's how it started at the beginning because the VACs was created, as I told you, because of emergencies" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013); and "I think the initial inputs to this work was the food security crises of 2000/2001. I'm not sure if the VAC existed before, but that is the time when they became more prominent and attracted more support from outside and it's also the time when the regional dimension sort of came to together in a, in a strong manner" (Int. 5 to Landman 2013).

Except for the food security emergencies at the time, the region was also dealing with the Angolan civil war; cholera outbreaks; drought; and floods (Holloway et al. 2013). One interviewee explained that economic factors and drought increased already-existing vulnerability, making it difficult to recover from shocks: "...some of the drought-driven food insecurities are also compounding sort of a national situation where generally I think people ...have been made vulnerable because of economic action and some of the systems that were naturally taking care of the food insecurity issues or requirements. Food security requirements ... have been ... reduced in terms of capacity" (Int. 31 to Landman 2013). This was also echoed in the RIASCO study, which argue that sub-Saharan Africa, including the SADC region, has remained vulnerable in the presence of frequent and compounding smaller-scale emergencies due to communities' lack of capacity to recover from them (Holloway et al. 2013). Table 9 gives an overview of the frequency of vulnerability shocks and drivers being mentioned during interviews, as well as the groups discussing them.

Shocks exposing vulnerability and drivers of vulnerability mentioned during interviews include (in order of frequency): climate change, poverty, drought, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malnutrition, floods, environmental degradation, cyclones, disease outbreaks, earthquakes, unemployment, urbanisation, orphaned households (due to HIV/AIDS), and pests. It is interesting to note that 7 out of the 14 mentioned drivers deal with ecological factors (climate change, cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, environmental degradation, and floods), five with social factors (disease outbreaks, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, orphan households, and urbanisation), and two with economic factors (poverty and unemployment).

Even though these shocks and drivers were mentioned during interviews, they have not yet begun to influence the VAC's approach to addressing vulnerability, which is essentially interpreted as vulnerability to food insecurity (see Chapter Five). Some of these drivers have enjoyed more attention in actual assessments than others, including poverty, drought, floods, malnutrition, environmental degradation, and urbanisation. Except for the ecological drivers directly influencing food security through affecting food

production, and those endangering people's physical safety, including drought and floods, ecological assessments have not been mainstreamed as part of VAC work (see Chapter Five).

Table 9: The frequency of vulnerability shocks and drivers mentioned during semi-structured interviews

	Consultants	Government	ICP	PMU	RVAC	TOTALS
Climate Change	15	14	21	0	0	50
Cyclones	0	0	2	0	2	4
Disease outbreaks	0	1	2	0	0	3
Drought	2	8	9	0	2	21
Earthquake	0	0	1	0	1	2
Environmental degradation	0	11	2	0	0	13
Floods	0	4	7	0	3	14
Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS)	3	4	11	0	1	19
Malnutrition	0	2	10	0	5	17
Orphan households	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pests	0	1	0	0	0	1
Poverty	4	18	4	0	1	27
Unemployment	0	2	0	0	0	2
Urbanisation	1	0	1	0	0	2
TOTALS:	25	66	70	0	15	176

Interviewees also spoke about the need for a platform for better cooperation and consensus, indicating that the regional parallel operating multi-sectoral structures at the time were hindering cooperation and consensus. Although an assessment of the influence of multi-sectoral administration structures in member states on national and international efforts dealing with uncertainty in the complex southern African region did not form part of this study, it is a crucial point for future studies. One interviewee cited a lack of collaboration leading to confusion (uncertainty) as a motivation for institutionalising an NVAC: "Insufficient coordination, networking and partnerships: The diverse information systems are not well coordinated. This has meant duplication of information and in some cases resulting in institutional conflicts, over-abundance of information and lack of standardisation leading to confusion for decision makers. Networking and partnerships between stakeholders responsible for generating food security and vulnerability information is not well defined and developed" (Int. 1 supplemented to Landman 2013). Another interviewee described how VAC assessments were applied to coordinate food and nutrition interventions across sectors: "...this VAC assessment is one of powerful tools to coordinate food security and nutrition. Because it's ... to make a recommendation to the sectors in which kind of intervention must be implemented at the local level" (Int. 10 to Landman 2013). The VAC thus emerged to address contextual food security emergencies, arguably compounded by a number of drivers, including ecological factors, and regional and national multi-sectoral structures that hindered consensus. Although there is an awareness of the impact of ecological dynamics on people's vulnerability, and an attempt to deal with the uncertainty these dynamics bring by establishing a platform that promotes consensus amongst participating actors, the VAC has not yet begun to influence

governance processes with the power to co-construct a more resilient future. This is further explored in the next section.

4.3.2 The documented foundation and evolution of the VAC

The documented narrative reported in this section confirms aspects of the narratives presented in the previous section, including factors that contributed to the evolution of the VAC policy arrangement. It is important to note that the document review did not include every VAC document ever produced, due to accessibility challenges at the time of the review (see Chapter Three); what I was able to access in January 2013 produced the documented narrative as reported here.

In 1999, when the RVAC was initiated in Harare in Zimbabwe, it was tasked with “keeping abreast and encourage [sic] co-ordinated development in the field of *vulnerability* assessment in the southern African region” (my emphasis). The VAC was to create a consensual platform that would help actors working in the field of humanitarian response to deal with uncertainty and intervene based on agreed-upon statistics. A year later, an SADC High-level Technical Consultation was held in Kariba, Zimbabwe. The Kariba Consultation is seen as a key milestone in the emergence of the VAC system in southern Africa. During the consultation an agreement on the core mandate for the RVAC was reached: “To strengthen the capacity of member states to undertake and utilise vulnerability assessments for the purpose of *food security* planning in both emergency and non-emergency situations” (my emphasis). Since the Kariba Consultation, vulnerability in the region became interpreted as vulnerability to food insecurity. In the three years that followed, the region was engulfed in food security crises and as such, the non-emergency objective and activities were not implemented. This is also reflected in the boxed account. As will be seen later, there was only a clear discursive shift away from vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity, and a re-emphasis on the non-emergency objective in 2004/5 with the launch of the RVAA programme.

In March 2001, SADC began the preparation of its Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) to deepen regional integration by providing consistent and comprehensive programmes for economic and social policies and programmes over the long term. It was finally approved in August 2003. The RISDP highlighted a number of priority intervention areas such as eradicating poverty, reducing HIV/AIDS, improving environment and sustainable development, private sector development, improving statistics of integrated SADC activities, trade and economic liberalisation and development, sustainable food security, and human and social development. These were integrated into a 15-year operational plan broken down into five and one-year business plans. As part of the RISDP, the SADC committed to improving the availability of information necessary for food security and poverty reduction policies and strategies at regional and national levels. This SADC commitment was another contextual factor that gave VAC efforts more leverage to become a permanent arrangement within the SADC structure.

In September 2003, following the completion of a number of successful food security emergency assessments, the VACs held a retreat in Gaborone. The motivation behind this retreat was to establish ways of formalising the VAC system in southern Africa, making it a sustainable institution. The term used in documents referring to the formalisation of the VAC system is ‘institutionalisation’, yet this is an ambiguous

term and especially so in the context of this paper where ‘institution’ means something different—the written and unwritten rules determining the behaviour within a policy arrangement. For the NVACs, ‘institutionalisation’ meant embedding NVACs in various national governments, as well as formalising and standardising procedures across the VAC system. To avoid confusion with the use of ‘institution’ as used in the literature review, ‘institutionalisation’ as used by the VACs will be replaced with ‘formalisation’ in the rest of the thesis. The 2003 retreat concluded that the formalisation of the VAC system should be strengthened, networks should be built with other institutions doing related work in the region, and assessments should be better coordinated with existing national monitoring systems and other initiatives developed by humanitarian agencies. This effort to formalise, how it has become an institutionalised process within the VAC, and its implications for transferring knowledge to policy is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

In 2004 the SADC commissioned the RVAC to conduct a three-step consultation process as part of its commitment to support NVAC activities. The process was also supposed to figure out how to best formalise the VAC. Based on the outcomes of the 2003 retreat, the RVAC had three objectives during the consultation process: strengthen institutional relationships, improve coordination of vulnerability assessments with national and other regional monitoring systems, and provide guidance to ensure monitoring and assessment activities produce credible and comparable results. The three-step consultation process included: 1) National consultations under the leadership of NVACs to discuss the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the NVAC-RVAC relationship as well as with other national institutions, and reviewing existing assessment and monitoring systems in the country; 2) An RVAC retreat to determine the ToR for RVAC-NVAC relationships, discuss future vulnerability assessments in the region, and draw out perceived weaknesses, opportunities, strengths and constraints in technical and institutional areas operating under the VAC system; and 3) A regional consultation on vulnerability assessment and monitoring activities to discuss and harmonise on going vulnerability assessment and monitoring activities in the region. The national consultation would then develop a three- to five-year strategy to further support vulnerability analysis in the region. In the documents relating to the consultation process, it is important to note a discursive shift away from the term ‘assessment’ to suddenly using the term ‘analysis’. According to these documents, assessments involved gathering raw data and analysing it, whilst analysis concerned the use of existing raw and/or processed data and collating it. Realising that there was already a multitude of data available; the aim began to shift towards bringing it together instead of replicating efforts. The acronym used to refer to both vulnerability assessments and analysis is VAA. This was clearly an internal driver for organisational change. It is unclear whether this change was driven only by a discursive shift, or whether other factors such as a lack of resources for gathering new data played a role.

Step 1: During the national consultations from April – June 2004, NVACs had to compile a national inventory and assessment of information systems (information providers and users), activities and policies relevant to vulnerability analysis, as well as a description of the most appropriate institutional placement of each NVAC in government structures. As also discussed in Chapter Seven, the placement of NVACs within government structures has become a significant determinant of NVACs’ focuses and the politics around the information generated by these structures. NVACs also had to write up a summary of a one-day stakeholder consultation on what each respective NVAC expected from the RVAC in the form of support. Only Lesotho, Swaziland,

Mozambique, and Zambia completed the first step. It is not clear whether the NVACS or RVAC synthesised these documents, but they were synthesised before the RVAC Retreat.

From these national reports it was possible to determine that Lesotho and Swaziland preferred a livelihoods approach²⁶ to food security assessments, Mozambique a combined food security and nutrition approach, and Zambia a pure food security approach. ICPs active in those countries influenced these approaches, as is also evident in discourses discussed in Chapter Five. It was also determined that a combination of early warning (of natural disasters such as floods or droughts), market prices, meteorological early warning, nutrition surveillance, and health surveillance were the core information systems active in each country. For baseline development and subsequent trend analysis, census, demographic, health, and household budget surveys, as well as core welfare or multiple indicator surveys, were used or to be used. These datasets often lacked quality, and were difficult to access and harmonise. These multiple data sources are products of multi-sectoral national public administration structures that operate parallel to each other, hindering cooperation between sectors and the formulation of a comprehensive overview of regional vulnerability or vulnerability to food insecurity.

A general finding reported after the first step of the three-step consultation was that NVACs were not entirely clear on whose mandate it was to link VAA information to policy formation, yet felt that their non-formalised nature prevented them from doing so. This emphasis on formalising NVACs highlights the assumption that NVACs embedded in national governments would automatically result in the usage of vulnerability information in national policies and that policies, if successfully implemented, would effectively address regional vulnerability. There was no indication in the analysed documents of an awareness of the way governance could co-create the ecological dynamics that the regional population's survival depended upon. The NVACs emphasised the importance of improving the VAA-policy linkage and mentioned the Mozambican Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) as a good example consisting of two units—one unit generating information and the other using it for policymaking. SETSAN was also discussed as having a well-working institutional set-up, which is interesting considering that interviewees from the first round of interviews identified it as a good example of an NVAC that has become less effective.

It was emphasised that those writing national Policy Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) were extremely important as information users and as key stakeholders for NVAC formalisation and should be targeted with VAA information. Member states prepare PRSPs every three years, ideally through a participatory process with domestic stakeholders, and development partners such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). PRSPs are supposed to describe member states' macroeconomic, structural and social policies, their programmes aiming to promote broad-based economic growth and reduce poverty, and

²⁶ The livelihoods approach groups people into different categories according to their access to assets and their ability to combine them into strategies for a means of living: human capital, natural capital, financial capital, social capital, and physical capital. Institutions, organisations, legislation and policies determine how these capitals are combined (Scoones 1998). A sustainable livelihood means maintaining or enhancing capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base, and being able to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks. In 1992, in collaboration with the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System, SC-UK developed a method for predicting, assessing, and monitoring famine: the HEA. By quantifying livelihood information and linking it to geographical areas, livelihood information became more practical for decision makers, indicating what impact a specific shock will have on livelihoods and food security (Scoones 1998).

identify financing needs and major sources of funding (IMF 2013). The documents are not policies, but an overview of policies and programmes with the aim of identifying gaps and needs for funding. If successfully targeted, the VAC would influence policy on a higher level than day-to-day policy processes. Specific national departments identified as VAC information users included agriculture, health, economic planning, and poverty reduction units. As departments in member states differ significantly, these were more general suggestions of departments that were concerned with related sectoral domains, than specifically identified departments in specific member states. Other data users included UN agencies, NGOs, and universities. It was also clear that definitions of vulnerability varied from vulnerability to food insecurity and nutrition to vulnerability to natural disasters to social vulnerability. It was however, agreed that vulnerability consisted of two parts: 1) exposure to a shock and 2) the ability of people to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of such a shock. From discussions in the rest of the document, it is possible to derive that these conceptualisations of vulnerability relate specifically to vulnerability as food insecurity. As discussed further in Chapter Five, there is a difference between documented definitions and the understanding of actors, which determine how they respond to challenges. The report also stated that the general understanding of vulnerability at the time began from a food security (availability and access) point of view, but was starting to move towards a wider synthesis that incorporated livelihoods in food security assessments. The implications of the VAC understanding of vulnerability are discussed in Chapter Five.

Step 2: The RVAC Retreat ran from 7–8 June 2004. The aims were to determine the ToR for the RVAC-NVAC relationships, the RVAC's relationship with regional stakeholders, and to discuss future proposal for VAC activities. A draft ToR was drawn up. Points 10 and 11 are most relevant to policy work in the VAC: "10. Development of training programmes to enhance the human resource capacity for technician[s] through policy and decision making levels, in collaboration with appropriate institutions within SADC" and "11. Advocate and raise awareness for the increased use of vulnerability analysis products in policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions." During the 2004 retreat a draft mission statement was also formulated: "The RVAC will work to strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems in order to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions in the SADC region". The retreat also emphasised that there should be a new focus towards monitoring or analysis, away from emergency based one-off assessments. There was also caution during talks about the placement of the RVAC with the SADC Secretariat, that it should not be moved from FANR to Disaster Management, as this would shift the focus to emergencies and not the much-needed trend analysis focusing on chronic issues such as HIV/AIDS and poverty. Recommendations were then made to the SADC Secretariat on the future of vulnerability analysis in the region and the institutional placement of the RVAC. Further research is required to establish the exact details of motivation behind the placement of the VAC within the SADC. Questions that should be answered include: Was it initially positioned under Disaster Management due to its relationship with the REWU? Why was it then moved to FANR? Why did the RVAC believe it would be moved back to Disaster Management?

A second phase of the second step of the consultation process involved an RVAC-NVAC meeting from 1–2 July 2004 to discuss roles, relationships, and criteria for a strong RVAC under the SADC umbrella, and in support to its most important client—the NVACs. The RVAC mandate and ToR were amended (the two relevant points from the ToR mentioned earlier remained intact). The amended RVAC mandate now stated:

“The RVAC will work to strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems in order to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions *that will lead to a reduction of vulnerability* in the SADC region” (amendments in italics). As discussed in Chapter Five, this amendment increased the degree of responsibility the VAC had for reducing regional vulnerability. Although the mandate has been presented up to now as belonging to the entire VAC, whenever it is quoted, it is linked specifically to the RVAC. This is problematic, as explored further in Chapter Six, as the RVAC has ceded its power to the RVAA PMU. During the RVAC-NVAC meeting, three main thematic areas were also identified for the regional consultation: policy, technical, and institutional. .

From 26–28 July 2004, the three-step consultation process came to an end with the third step, the regional stakeholder consultation. The main results from the meeting were that VAA had to be broadened to look into the underlying factors that lead to poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition; a recognition of the need to improve the use of VAA information in policy formation, programme design, and action planning (especially in PRSP and the design of social safety nets to support livelihoods); an identification of the areas where NVACs require support from the RVAC (technical support with information management and training, resource mobilisation, repository of best practices, and advocacy for adequate institutional placement); and that NVACs had to be placed in structures that would facilitate the use of VAA in policy making and link it with poverty mapping. This last point again emphasises the assumption that formalising the NVACs would lead to the use of VAA in national policy making.

In 2005, the RVAC developed the RVAA programme based on the outcomes of the consultation process in 2004. The SADC Council of Ministers approved it in June 2005. The programme was implemented in two phases with an internal review and second-phase planning done in 2008. The overall objective was the same as the amended RVAC mandate from the third step of the 2004 consultation process, the VAC mandate that remains valid at the time of writing this thesis. Key phrases used to unpack this objective included “support coherent policy making at both national and regional levels”, “promoting a common understanding ... concerning the nature and cause of vulnerability in the SADC region”, “enhance policy decision-making at all levels, regarding short-term emergency response and long-term development in strengthening social protection”, “generating high quality information that can be fed back to local communities and used in local (poverty reduction) decision making processes” and “providing insights into household access to nutritional requirement and other basic developmental needs”. The RVAA programme goals were threefold: through building up and strengthening of national and regional VAA systems, a) enhance national policy formulation, development programmes, and emergency interventions; b) strengthen the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of SADC’s RISDP; and c) support ICPs to make informed decisions in their allocation of resources for short and long-term regional interventions. Based on this, the VACs aimed mainly to influence national policies and programmes, not regional or ICP policies.

Research used to motivate the programme, as well as a shift away from chronic food security emergency assessments to also include trend analysis of acute livelihood vulnerability over time, included the 2002/3 FAO State of Food Insecurity in the World Report, and an unreferenced 2003 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) review of regional nutritional trends. A number of underlying factors

testing livelihood resilience were outlined as erratic climatic conditions, reduced purchasing power, rising food prices, failing employment markets, reduction of remittances, deteriorating social services, and increased morbidity and mortality levels linked to communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS. As also mentioned in the previous section and demonstrated in Table 9, although similar remarks about ecological factors and especially climate change were made by interviews, manifested ecological assessments were not documented. It may be that the REWU has continued to monitor and assess ecological factors, yet as further explored in Chapter Seven, such assessments have not been analysed as part of VAA yet.

Three VAC clients were identified for the RVAA programme: the SADC Secretariat, SADC member states, and ICPs. The main objectives in relation to these clients included:

- 1) SADC Secretariat – support the implementation and monitoring of the SADC's RISDP by fostering a better understanding of food security and livelihood conditions, allowing for better targeting of emergency and development initiatives; provide timely regional synthesis reports on VAA information to strengthen disaster preparedness, poverty mitigation, and livelihood risk reduction; and enhance the capacity of the Secretariat to undertake multi-sectoral analysis on issues of vulnerability.
- 2) SADC Member States – provide technical support to cross-sectoral and inter-agency vulnerability analysis groups or NVACs in undertaking comprehensive VAA; strengthen institutional relationships and assist with the formalisation of NVACs in government structures; facilitate and support the use of VAA information in national policy formation and programming, with a particular emphasis on long-term interventions; and act as a Centre of Excellence (CoE) and repository of best practices by providing information, guidelines, and toolkits on approaches and methodologies for VAA.
- 3) ICPs – enhance collaboration and coordination to improve comprehensive VAA, information sharing, consensus building, and resource mobilisation; promote local level regional and national information systems instead of duplicating efforts; harmonise VAA methodologies for comparability; and enhance use of VAA information by relevant stakeholders for future emergency and recovery response initiatives, as well as for the design of donor programmes that strengthen social safety nets, and mitigate poverty in the medium and long term. Based on this, the RVAC also had an interest in influencing future ICP programmes that aimed to reduce vulnerability.

By mid-2005 the main donor of the RVAC, the government of the United Kingdom's (UK's) Department for International Development (DfID) had implemented its four-year Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP). The RHVP was implemented in six southern African countries, including Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The aim of the RHVP was to improve both short and long-term responses to hunger and vulnerability in the region. Australian Aid (AusAid) also funded the RHVP (FEG Consulting & Save the Children, United Kingdom (SC-UK) 2008). The programme would work with SADC programmes to avoid duplication. As part of the RHVP, DfID planned to cover technical inputs that would coordinate VAA work, such as deepening knowledge of food dynamics at country level to match assessments with responses, enhancing government-led mechanisms to encourage a more balanced approach from donors, and better integration of VAA information. Although working in collaboration with the VAC, the RHVP was an external factor. With DfID being its main funder, it could be argued that pressure

would have been placed on the VAC to align its activities with the RHVP's, which are stated as improving both short- and long-term responses to both hunger and vulnerability in the region.

In 2005, through the South African government, WFP provided ten million ZAR to strengthen the development of an integrated Food Security Information and Vulnerability Mapping System (FIVIMS) in South Africa, as well as strengthen the RVAC's technical and analytical capacity to coordinate and promote multi-disciplinary food security and VAA. This initiative also worked closely with the RVAA programme. According to one interviewee, FIVIMS delayed the establishment of the South African NVAC (SAVAC): "...initially South Africa didn't adopt the VAC system... They instead used FIVIMS so ... Food Insecurity Vulnerability and Information Mapping... they adopted that as a tool to make decisions, to inform decision making, but then for some reason it didn't work out. The same problems still persisted like there was still [a] lack of disaggregated data that could be used to inform policy and programming. There was still [a] lack of integration in terms of the information systems. There were still interviews in terms of the institutions. There was still lack of participation of some people like from the civil society, from the research community, academic community. Yes, there was still a lack of participation from those stakeholders. So now I think it was in 2010 that we approached SADC to assist us with doing the feasibility study to explore the possibility of institutionalising SAVAC, which is similar to the to that of other countries" (Int. 1 to Landman 2013). Upon reading a draft of my thesis, a consultant to the SAVAC commented that he recalls a different outcome of FIVIMS. Although not certain of the exact figures, he was confident enough to claim that only 30 per cent of the WFP funding was used to conduct a feasibility study of the information management system before launching FIVIMS in South Africa. One of the conclusions of the feasibility study was that it would be too costly for the country and that emphasis needed to be placed on an institutional design that enabled multi-sectoral collaboration before rolling out surveys. The other 70 per cent of the funding provided by WFP therefore went into strengthening the VAC's technical and analytical capacity²⁷.

As one of the outcomes of the RVAA programme, a PMU had to be established under the overall supervision of the SADC FANR. The PMU was tasked with providing technical and financial support to existing and new NVACs. There was a 14-month slippage between the approval of the RVAA programme and the launch of the RVAA PMU in August 2006. The unit started to function in December 2006 and priority was given to technical support to member states. A full complement of staff was only in place by November 2007, including a Project Coordinator and VAA Expert.

In 2006 a panel comprised of SADC FANR and SADC Education and Skills Development, together with a number of ICPs, undertook a scoping study to identify a regional CoE. The main aims of the CoE would be to meet the capacity gaps of NVACs. It would do so by operating as a hub that would draw on other educational institutes and curriculums in the region. The CoE selection process involved an overview of potential institutions in the region, which were then shortlisted according to a list of criteria. The shortlisted institutions then had the opportunity to apply for the position as regional CoE.

²⁷ It was only after negotiation that a second process began with WFP funding to see whether it could be consolidated into one district. The original study was fully funded by the South African government in recognition that they needed to report both internally and externally to commitments to monitoring food security in the country.

In November 2006, the African Centre for Food Security (ACFS) at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) was selected to develop and host the CoE. In March 2007, the ACFS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the RHVP, who was appointed by SADC to start the process of operationalising the CoE while arrangements were being put in place by SADC to formalise the agreement between SADC and the ACFS. Under the RHVP-ACFS MoU, ACFS was tasked to develop a long-term capacity building and strategic plan. A draft was expected in May 2007. The plan had to engage all stakeholders, including the RVAC, NVACs, donors, and other tertiary institutes, to understand the capacity and training needs of the VAC and based on these outcomes had to develop modules, determine resource requirements, as well as timeframes.

In the early planning cycle the RHVP-ACFS relationship worked well, yet as time went by and agreed outputs were not generated, a degree of contention became apparent between the two institutions, marked by the exchange of hostile e-mails. In early May 2007, FANR intervened and called a meeting with the principals of the FAO, WFP, FEWSNET, DfID, and RHVP. The main output of the meeting was that the RVAA PMU would now act on behalf of the SADC FANR as principal partner to the CoE.

For completion in June 2007, the PMU and ACFS developed a short-term one-year VAA training programme to run between October 2007 and December 2008, whilst the ACFS was working on a five-year plan. Known as the Capacity Building and Training Programme (CBTP), its intention was to meet the general backlog of regional demands for capacity building through short term training events. It was met with some resistance from the ACFS and some of the partners, and required further negotiations and compromise before everyone was satisfied.

At the time, the demand for capacity building was high with differing needs between countries, ranging from basic VAA training and baseline development to early warning scenario modelling, and the development of user-friendly media (such as posters, brochures or media clips) for non-technical audiences. The CBTP also had to address the need for annual assessments and on going monitoring training for 2008, as well as train skilled professionals to assess and analyse new information to meet shifting policy priorities and response programmes (then emphasising chronic hunger and poverty). It was thought that the CBTP could pilot foundation courses for the longer term ACFS plan. The ACFS began bilateral negotiations with identified collaborating partners, but these were stalled because of funding issues. After a few attempts by the RVAC to resolve the issue, it was decided that all CoE activities would be suspended until participants' sponsorship, costs for module development, and consultancy fees had been clarified. It was not clear who would be responsible for these clarifications.

With regards to the focus of this thesis, it is important to note here that although nine CBTP training courses were developed to meet capacity and training needs, none addressed the overall need for the preparation of user-friendly media that would assist policy makers to use VAA information. There was, however, a planned one-day seminar for national level advocacy for national policy makers, programme managers, politicians, government officials, NGO staff, donors, UN agencies, and the media: a decision-maker's guide on the utilisation of VAA information. One of the objectives of the seminar was to critically engage in the process of

translating results into programme and policy recommendations. If and when this workshop happened is unknown. There was also a planned technical forum, which would support the long-term vision for the CoE and future curriculum development, which engaged policy makers. Whether it was carried out is unreported.

In March 2008, the SADC commissioned an internal review of the RVAA programme. The funding cycles were to end in September 2008, and it was necessary to review the programme to support the design of a next phase and mobilise resources for it. A consultant carried out the review through a consultative log frame based on documents provided by the PMU, RVAC members, WFP, FAO, FEWSNET, and RHVP. The document review was supplemented by interviews with the PMU and representatives from WFP, FAO, RHVP and the senior programme manager at SADC FANR Agriculture Information Systems. This extensive review delivered five main recommendations to be incorporated in the second phase of the programme: 1) Establish the PMU's programme financial management systems; 2) Provide training and capacity building input to member states; 3) Provide resources in support of VAA to member states; 4) Establish advocacy/information/communication and dissemination requirements through a much expanded set of VAA publications, briefs, policy dialogues, and a web portal; and 5) Enhance policy dialogue and synthesis through national and regional strategic dialogue, policy syntheses and consensus on major policy issues. Two of the five recommendations therefore related to dissemination of VAA information and how to improve its use in policies.

The purpose of the second phase (2008–2010) of the RVAA programme was also to improve regional and national policy formulation, development programmes, and emergency interventions through strengthening national and regional VAA. It would again support its three main constituencies: member states, the SADC Secretariat and ICPs. The second phase would focus on four priorities: VAA training and capacity building and other resources provided to member states; advocacy of VAA where awareness remained low, formalisation of NVACs within national government structures where they remained unstructured and strengthening existing institutional structures; enhanced linkages of VAA information to policy processes at regional and national levels; and consolidating the SADC FANR through the RVAA programme as a CoE supporting VAA in the SADC region.

During the process of designating the ACFS as the official identified SADC CoE, an official MoU had to be signed. When the draft MoU was submitted to the SADC Legal Unit, it requested an institutional verification report as per the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training on the establishment of CoEs and Centres of Specialisation, to verify arrangements and pronouncements that were made in the winning bid of a CoE. This institutional review process was carried out from 2–4 June 2008. The main review findings included that the ACFS did not have adequate staff at the time, or enough resources to expand activities that would come with the added demands of a CoE. It offered a food security programme only at postgraduate level, had no course focusing specifically on hunger and vulnerability, and had not concluded culminating negotiations with strategic tertiary partnerships in the region into MoUs. The ACFS benefited from a robust financial management system put in place by the UKZN and the offered postgraduate courses had been subject to rigorous certification mechanisms and quality assurance processes. The review panel then made

some key recommendations to the ACFS, and agreed that the SADC-ACFS MoU could be signed on condition that the ACFS improved and rectified the identified capacity shortfalls within two years.

In June 2009 (a year after the ASDC-ACFS MoU was signed), the ACFS had not yet been able to deliver on its objectives and as such left a vacuum in VAA training and capacity building. Consequently and following a motion proposed by the Programme Manager of the PMU in April 2009, a Technical Working Group on Training and Capacity Building (TWGTCB) was established to provide a forum through which a curriculum of VAA training courses could be established. The TWGTB could be compared to the 2007 CBTP. The TWGTCB would exist only until September 2010 to provide advice on the content and structure of a training and capacity building curriculum. The TWGTCB decided that two levels of training should be provided: regionally relevant theoretical training, as well as practical mentoring and technical exchange visits. The number and kind of training events delivered by September 2010 were not reported on. At the time of writing this thesis, the CoE was still not fully operational. This is further unpacked in Chapter Seven.

Although more reports on AOMs were available on the old SADC website, for the purpose of this paper only the two latest AOM reports from 2009 and 2010 were analysed for themes. On the new website the AOM reports for 2002, 2011, 2012 and 2013 are listed, yet the links to actual reports are inactive. During 2009 and 2010 the AOMs had the same three objectives: 1) to share NVAC experiences, lessons learnt, and achievements; 2) discuss major challenges and possible solutions; as well as 3) streamline work plans and activities for the following year.

In December 2009 in the context of the 2009 Hague Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, the focus for the AOM was set on providing early warning information for timely policy decision making, as well as harmonising results for comparability across the region. The AOM was held in Livingstone, Zambia. During the meeting the PMU expressed concern about the fact that after almost two years since signing the MoU, the CoE was not operational yet. In turn the ACFS presented results of an investigation into the roles of VAC members, which was conducted to better identify required training. Important to note from these findings are that most (66-68 per cent) VAC members were involved with data collection, analysis, and reporting, whilst only 40-41 per cent focused on monitoring, evaluation, and data management, and a mere 29 per cent were dedicated to policy.

The 2009 AOM report makes reference to the 2003 Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a key international commitment to take cognisance of when designing training programmes. The report specifically emphasises the third pillar of CAADP, the Framework for African Food Security (FAFS), which was validated in 2008. CAADP is a programme of *The New Partnership for Africa's Development*. According to the CAADP website (<http://www.nepad-caadp.net/about-caadp.php>) the overall goal of the programme is "...to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture. To do this, African governments have agreed to increase public investment in agriculture by a minimum of 10 per cent of their national budgets and to raise agricultural productivity by at least 6 per cent". The vision of FAFS is to

increase resilience²⁸ at all levels by decreasing food insecurity and linking vulnerable groups to agricultural opportunities. Within this context the ACFS made commitments to deliver capacity building and training to the VACs and declared that all previous issues delaying CoE operations had been resolved. By 2003, the focus of the VAC was thus not only on food security, but also on achieving food security by improving agriculture, the availability dimension of food security. In 2009, the VAC was therefore still using the CAADP FAFS as a guiding document.

NVAC presentations on experiences, challenges, methods (including the Household Vulnerability Index by the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) by FAO), and the southern Africa Livelihood Map²⁹, followed the ACFS presentation. The AOM also consisted of presentations of NVAC work plans for 2010. Of the 21 activities outlined in the work plans, only one related to policy making (Activity 10: VAC Processes Sensitisation Meetings to High Level Officials, Mass Media) and only 3 of the 11 members states planned for it (Botswana, Malawi, and Namibia) with a budget of US\$ 59 000 out of the total US\$ 5.83 million³⁰ RVAA programme budget (1 per cent of the budget).

The 2010 AOM was held in Maputo, Mozambique. Once again proceedings followed the programme set out in 2009. Only 1 of the 18 outlined activities in the work plans for 2011 related to policy making (Activity 9: Advocacy: VAC Processes Sensitisation). Only 3 of the then 15 member states planned for it (Mozambique, Malawi, and Namibia) with a budget of US\$ 33 600 out of the total US\$ 9.39 million RVAA programme budget (0.36 per cent of the budget). There was thus a clear decreased proportional allocation to advocacy in 2010.

The RVAA programme has produced a number of VAA Synthesis Reports since 2006 to report on the proceedings of annual Regional Dissemination Meetings. At these meetings NVACs highlight their food security and vulnerability assessment outcomes “by indicating population groups and areas vulnerable to food security, as well as underlying causes and other multi-sectoral issues impacting food security.” The objectives of these meetings are to 1) share and discuss VAA results; 2) share and discuss best practices in VAA related matters; and 3) prepare an overview of food insecurity and vulnerability in SADC. These meetings are thus aimed to bridge research and policy, yet as discussed in Chapter Seven, the same VAC high level actors are invited to these annual meetings, and thus not necessarily national policy makers who can apply the research. Synthesis reports give an overview of the regional and national social economic contexts, a summary of that year’s hazards and shocks, the regional and national food security and vulnerability situations, as well as coping strategies. Hazards and shocks include unexpected rainfall, livestock diseases, HIV/AIDS, access to income, human and animal conflict, commodity prices, climate

²⁸ It is important to note that this is the only mention of ‘increasing resilience’ in all of the analysed documents. ‘Reducing vulnerability’ is the preferred term in all the other documents. This may cause some conflicts, as strategies aiming to reduce vulnerability and strategies aiming to increase resilience would be different from each other, yet it could also be understood as meaning the same. The mention of resilience is, however, still strongly connected to the notion of food security.

²⁹ See <http://gisportal.sadc.int/lzmap/> for the map.

³⁰ This total was not indicated, but calculated by adding up various indicated country totals.

change, and civil unrest, although some such as climate change are only listed as shocks and not reported on.

The most recently available SADC VAA Synthesis Report at the time of the document analysis is dated 2011. It revealed some of the underlying ideas informing VAC activities, and offers some very specific policy recommendations that aim to bridge research and policy. They seem to be a mixture of vague goals and clearer measures, however. In short, these include:

- Increased social protection and safety net programmes;
- Infrastructure development for improved market access;
- Continued input and output subsidy agricultural programmes;
- Facilitation of inter-country trade from surplus to deficit areas;
- Implementation of medium to long-term interventions and development programmes to address chronic vulnerability issues and high levels of poverty;
- Encouragement for cooperating partners and traders to procure regionally;
- Scaling up and prioritisation of food and nutrition security programmes;
- Linking food security and climate change to devise and implement adaptation and mitigation measures;
- Promote smallholder irrigation technologies to minimise dependence on rain.

A 2012 Synthesis Report was made available towards the end of the document review. It was omitted from the sampled documents, as a preliminary overview revealed that the policy recommendations in the 2012 Report remained exactly the same as those in the 2011. This is important, as it suggests that the recommendations were generic and not related to specific contextual changes, except if the context remained unchanged from one year to the next, which is unlikely in the dynamic southern African SES.

In 2012, the RVAA programme was extended for a second time until the end of 2016. The title of the new programme document revealed a shift in emphasis: *Building Resilience to Climate Change and Other Causes of Poverty*. At the time of writing this thesis, the RVAA programme is thus in its third phase. Although a climate change workshop was conducted in the beginning of 2013 to begin to develop methods to integrate climate change and food security data, the workshop has not yet resulted in actual assessments that consider climate change. The influence of the international resilience discourse on discursive shifts within the VAC is further discussed in Chapter Five.

4.3.3 Contextual and internal factors shaping the VAC policy arrangement

Box 5 presents the major contextual and internal factors that resulted in the emergence and evolution of the VAC policy arrangement along a timeline. Not reported in the two above-mentioned narratives are international discourses around food security and vulnerability, but these discourses are presented in Chapter Five from the discourse dimension. Nevertheless, the start of these discourses is included in Box 5 in italics to offer a more comprehensive timeline. Discourse shifts are also indicated in italics on the right side of the box. Some of these factors were also used to inform 16.

The two narratives presented in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 echo that the VAC emerged and was consolidated due to crises, as well as the fact that food security has always played a central role when considering vulnerability. The VAC's understanding of vulnerability was born out of an earlier understanding of food security as linked to food availability. Vulnerability was considered the human facet of food security—identifying those who would suffer from food shortages. Although the VAC has developed discursively to also consider the access dimension of food security, as well as considering food security from a livelihoods perspective, notions of food security and emergency food security specifically in the VAC vulnerability discourse (Chapter Five) remain strong. The most recent discursive shifts include ideas around climate change and resilience. Furthermore, given that regional food security emergencies require urgent attention, a fixation on responding to emergency food security has prevented the VAC from contributing to longer term interventions to reduce vulnerability. The VAC's vulnerability discourse is discussed in detail in the Chapter Five.

Box 5: Contextual and internal factors shaping the VAC policy arrangement

	Contextual factors		Internal factors
Contextual shocks (table 8)	Food insecurity emergencies Regional & national multi-sectoral structures Lack of vulnerability specifics by the REWU <i>World Food Summit in Rome (1996) and strong global emphasis on food security</i>	1990s	
		1999	VAC launched
	Food insecurity emergency	2000	Kariba consultation – <i>food security</i>
		2001	
	SADC RISDP	2002	
	<i>Vulnerability/resilience discourse takes shape</i>	2003	Gabarone retreat - <i>formalisation</i>
	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme – CAADP	2004	3-step consultation - <i>analysis</i>
		2005	RVAA Phase 1 – <i>inform policy</i>
	DfID RHVP; FIVIMS in South Africa	2006	ACFS established as CoE
		2007	PMU established
		2008	RVAA review & Phase 2; CoE Review
	CAADP FAFS	2009	TWGTCB established
		2010	
		2011	
		2012	RVAA Phase 3 – <i>climate change</i>

Compounding drivers of vulnerability and specifically vulnerability to food security include ecological occurrences such as droughts and floods. Although the VAC consider these as impacting food shortages, the influence of other ecological factors such as climate change has not been translated into VAA. Climate change has become the latest popular discourse within the VAC, yet has remained at the discourse level.

The RVAA programme has focused on formalising NVACs within national governments, assuming that it would result in national policies aiming to reduce vulnerability. There are two issues with this assumption: firstly, it assumes that national policy-making structures are working flawlessly and that formalisation would allow the VAC to benefit from this process. Secondly, it assumes that policy could effectively reduce vulnerability. Both assumptions are problematic, as further discussed in Chapter Seven. The lack of formalised training structures within the VAC has left the committee under-capacitated, which also has implications for the transfer of research to policies. This is further explored in Chapter Seven.

4.4 Scale and specificity in context

Two other contextual issues that have not emerged in the interview or document review narratives presented above, yet were discussed in the first chapter and identified in other interviews, are scale and specificity. These concepts also did not come through as clearly in any of the other PAA dimensions, suggesting that the PAA could be adjusted to accommodate contextual dynamics from the ground up. Scale and specificity are linked to aspects of complexity and should be considered when dealing with uncertainty arising from complex SES. As explored in the first chapter, Adger et al. (2011) argue that more flexible institutions allow for responsive and flexible solutions at the appropriate scale and thus aid adaptive capacity. They also argue that “[r]esponses developed at larger scales may actively limit or undermine the range of responses at the local level, effectively inhibiting the sources of resilience that are available” (Adger et al. 2011:764). Arguably this is because responses at smaller scales would be more specific and appropriate to that context.

Interviewees explained how the scale of contexts influenced aspects such as data gathering strategies, programming, and even funding. Going down to the smallest possible scale, such as the district level or even the household level, improves the specificity of data gathered and consequently how appropriate vulnerability interventions would be to addressing issues in specific communities—the more assessments could zoom in to an area to gather data, the more specific the data would be for informing interventions. More detailed information allows for greater adaptability. Doing assessments at the household level is, however, more expensive than simply gathering national statistics about food shortages. Table 10 indicates the frequency of which these two issues were discussed in interviews, and by what groups. Governments and ICPs discussed the importance of specificity in planning and programmes more often than scales, whilst consultants and the RVAC referred to issues relating to scale more often.

Table 10: The frequency of scale and specificity discussions in semi-structured interviews

	Consultants	Government	ICP	RVAC	TOTALS
C Scale	9	31	12	2	54
C Specificity	1	34	14	1	50
TOTALS	10	65	26	3	104

Scale refers to the relative levels within the VAC moving up from households to districts, combining into local levels, which moves up to provincial, national, regional, and finally the global level. These different scales not only determine aspects such as institutional structures, food security, methods, dissemination, and planning, but also are important to consider when reducing vulnerability. One interviewee explained how the

institutional structures of the VAC and the distribution of power and roles are determined by scales: "...the reason why [the VAC] had to actually be coordinated at SADC... regional level and coordinated by the governments at a national level, [was] so that...ownership [of] all those processes is with the government at [national] level and ownership [of coordination] is with SADC at a regional level" (Int. 8 to Landman 2013) and "...in terms of the food and nutrition security system...there are committees at various levels. National, provincial, district and lower level, and then part of it is to come up with a system which comes up with the ... required information at those various levels" (Int. 26 to Landman 2013). With regards to institutional dynamics influencing the use of research in policy, the different institutional scales would need effective communication channels and structures between them to support the flow of information.

Another interviewee explained how aspects of food security related to different scales—self-sufficiency could be understood at national level, whilst nutrition was a household level issue: "... it's about self-sufficiency. That's when they say, yes in this country... when they're talking food security. You know the whole dimension of going down to the household level ... to the nutrition aspects of an individual" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013).

Data collection is also determined by scale: "So the way it has been designed, you go down at the district level and even beyond because in terms of data collection for HEA, we go down to where we call EPA level. The EPA level is [the]...agricultural extension planning area. Extension planning area is a minute area below the district, where an agriculture officer is supposed to take control and assist the farmers in the best practices" (Int. 19 to Landman 2013). Sometimes regional frameworks need to be adapted fit local contexts: "...we have the HFA, the Hugo Framework for Action, which is like a blueprint for disaster risk management... our policy statements and blueprint are just trying to localise that global framework" (Int. 22 to Landman 2013). Dissemination of vulnerability results and recommendations for planning were also discussed in terms of scale: "So we have it two ways, twice per year, we present the results at the council of minister, the situation of food security and nutrition, and after that ... we present the recommendation to solve the problem that we found... at provincial level" (Int. 10 to Landman 2013). One example of the relevance of scale in planning, is that local or regional procurement for food aid would shorten response times: "...I think being able to quickly determine and then obviously the logistic cycle is much shorter in terms of managing to capture...to procure food in the region as oppose to ... from overseas" (Int. 31 to Landman 2013).

Closely relating to the issue of scale is contextual specificity. Different scales have different specifics and thus require different approaches. A number of interviews highlighted this issue. One interview explained that going to the smallest scale when collecting data allowed them to collect area-specific information: "...we also do some kind of qualitative assessment where we recently started to visit the rural development offices where, what we call the RDAs³¹...where we get information from them in terms of how, because they've got extension offices from the minister of agriculture, they've got valuable information pertaining to better performance, in those particular areas" (Int. 33 to Landman 2013). Another explained how people's vulnerability would differ from one context to the next: "...we have different kind[s] of ... vulnerability. There

³¹ Rural Development Areas.

are people [who] are mostly vulnerable [to a lack of] water, they have big problems [with] drought... [on the other hand] we have the people that are more vulnerable...[to] floods...The adaptation should be different, because it's two scenarios that are very different" (Int. 10 to Landman 2012). Two interviews explained the implications of intervening without taking economic and cultural contexts into consideration: "There are economic consequences to these decisions [about humanitarian assistance]. If we provide cash in areas where there's very little maize, you're bound to push the price. If you bring maize into areas where there's some maize, you're bound to dampen the prices of maize...[and] it discourages even the farmers from producing maize. So we have to come up with a proper balance in terms of the type of response for each area" (Int. 15 to Landman 2013) and "...you know people... use livestock especially cattle ... as a sign of wealth ... someone would prefer not to sell his or her cattle to buy himself... a pair a shoes, because they want to see them in numbers rather than to sell them. And that has been the trade, so they the culture is, they don't take livestock I mean as a business. It's taken as a form of wealth. So you'd rather have your five cattle and [go hungry]" (Int. 24 to Landman 2013). Although this is the case, some methodologies consider cattle a form of resilience to deal with shocks: "...someone with five cattle is food secure, ...or that their argument [is] that person [will] be willing to immediately sell those beasts to get some buckets or bits of maize or mielie meal" (Int. 24 to Landman 2013). Another interviewee also explained that the VAC is able to adapt to accommodate specific crises: "...you find that in, in a crisis environment you then looking at economy crisis or the environmental crisis. The VAC's are being shifted to consider generating information that feed into addressing the problems in those countries" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). Both scale and specificity were recurrent themes throughout the research.

4.5 Conclusion

The VAC's history and the contextual factors shaping the VAC policy arrangement helped identify key issues that are explored further in the rest of the thesis. Two separate narratives were discussed: one, drawing on a single account of a founding RVAC member to explore the foundation of the VAC; the second, drawing on an analysis of accessible official VAC documents. Where relevant, both narratives were supplemented or confirmed with quotes from other interviews. From these two narratives it became clear that vulnerability, as it was initially interpreted, referred to the human aspect of food security. At the time, food security was understood as food availability, and self-sufficiency was thus the ultimate aim to ensure food security. Vulnerability assessments were done to establish who would be affected by food shortages—this "who" was considered vulnerable. It is also clear that the VAC's understanding of vulnerability is rooted in crises, both preceding and immediately following the establishment of the VAC. These crises refer specifically to food security emergencies, although other disasters such as floods and drought were also discussed. Some of these contextual challenges were considered drivers that compound vulnerability, and inhibit people's ability to cope with or adapt to shocks. The VAC was specifically created to deal with the manifestations of ecological drivers such as floods and droughts. Although it has recognised the potential of governing systems to co-create how these drivers affect populations in the future through policy processes, it has not yet successfully informed such processes. It has, however, informed ICP programmes dealing with food security emergencies.

The VAC was also established as a consensual platform to help actors working in food security in the region deal with uncertainty. The reality of regional and national parallel multi-sectoral structures, and the application of a diversity of methods with consequent divergence of the outcomes of estimations of food insecurity, necessitated a consensual platform. The VAC has however evolved to now accept that different NVACs will use different approaches. It could be argued that the acceptance of a multitude of frameworks and methods allows for better contextualised outcomes, which would be valid if the VAC can demonstrate how it is effectively reducing regional vulnerability. The capacity for dealing with uncertainty would, however, require uncertainty assessments, and better evaluation and monitoring of existing assessments and interventions to allow for constant adaptation.

This chapter also distinguished between contextual and inherent factors that led to the development and evolution of the VAC. Although a slow process, it is possible to see that the VAC's interpretation of vulnerability has been influenced by international discourses. Initially, at the time of a strong international food security discourse, the VAC interpreted vulnerability as food security. As also explored in the next chapter, the discourse around food security specifically also developed with the international discourse, slowly integrating other food security dimensions such as access. With the new resilience discourse emerging on the global discourse level in the early 2000s, the VAC had to take notice. The climate change focus of the third phase of the RVAA programme has arguably been influenced by this global discourse. This is further explored in Chapter Five. Other developments within the VAC include a move from only doing assessments to also analysing existing data sources, and a recommitment to inform policy in the second phase of the RVAA programme. Two other contextual aspects that emerged from the data are scales and specificity. These issues will remain relevant as long as the VAC aims to deal with ecological drivers in specific contexts that affect human survival. With regards to institutional dynamics, having different institutional scales require effective communication structures between these levels to support the flow of information and specifically the use of research in policy processes. This is a key finding that did not come through as clearly in any of the other PAA dimensions, suggesting that the PAA could possibly be adjusted to accommodate contextual dynamics from the ground up.

Chapter Five: Discourses

5.1 Introduction

Up to this point I have introduced the aim and motivation of the study, as well as the case study, underlying theory, and analytical framework. I justified the application of the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) as analytical framework in the case of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC). I've explained the overarching methodology and research design, and have introduced the various methods used to gather data to populate the PAA framework. The most recent chapter contained VAC narratives, which contextualised the research within the complex southern African region and identified both external and internal factors that contributed to the formation and evolution of the VAC policy arrangement. Discourses that have emerged from the context include the food security discourse that took form on a global scale in 1996, and the resilience discourse, which started taking shape in development and humanitarian discourse in the early 2000s. These have influenced internal VAC discourses on vulnerability, as explored in this chapter. This chapter aims to answer the research question from the first PAA dimension, namely the discourse dimension.

The discourse dimension is considered theoretically as part of the PAA to explain two policy levels on which discourses take place: the governing level and day-to-day policy levels. I explore how power dynamics on the governing level have resulted in international food security discourses initially informing discourse on the day-to-day level. I also argue that the formalisation of National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs) within governments has stifled continued transferal of the international resilience discourse to shape discourse on the day-to-day level, and that consequently the discourse remains focused on food security. The neglected governance dimension of the politics of knowledge, as introduced in Chapter Two, is thus relevant to discussions in this chapter. Considering both levels, I explore how the VAC has come to define vulnerability, the evolution of the vulnerability discourse(s), and its implications for reducing regional vulnerability. The point of answering the research question from this angle is to identify blockages to and catalysts for the interpretation of vulnerability that translates into the rules that actors use to apply power and resources to inform policy that aim to reduce regional vulnerability.

5.2 Two discourse levels in the PAA

In the context of this research, discourse refers to the dominant interpretive schemes that give meaning to a policy domain, including formal policy concepts and popular narratives (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). These concepts and narratives relate specifically to the definitions of the problems and solutions actors in a policy arrangement are trying to address and the approaches they employ (Arts, Leroy & Van Tatenhove 2006). As Adger et al. (2011:762) put it: "The way in which a problem is conceptually framed determines the way in which responses are identified and evaluated and therefor influences the range of response characteristics." "Problem framing and the urgency of the perceived threat influence planning and implementation horizons" (Adger et al. 2011:763).

In the VAC case, I am specifically interested in the way the vulnerability discourse has emerged from the policy arrangement and how it has changed since the inception of the VAC. Although vulnerability has been

defined in the introduction as a system's sensitivity to shocks, in development work, policy tends to focus on more specific vulnerabilities. In the case of the SADC VAC, vulnerability has since the inception of the committee been closely related to food insecurity. The narrative presented in the previous chapter highlighted some of the key contextual reasons for this food insecurity interpretation of vulnerability, including food security emergencies during the VAC's inception and in its earlier years, as well as a strong global food security discourse. In this chapter I continue to explore how this discourse has emerged and shifted within the VAC. I also investigate its implications for the reduction of regional vulnerability.

Within the PAA, the discourse dimension relates to the content of the policy arrangement, whereas the other dimensions relate to its organisation (Leroy & Arts 2006). Discourse plays a determining role in shaping new institutions or rules that in turn shape how actors in the arrangement behave and eventually become organised (Jones 2009). Approaching the research question from the discourse dimension implies seeing knowledge and power as interwoven (Jones 2009). As also discussed in Chapter Two, the politics of knowledge are often neglected in governance. This chapter discusses key findings related to this theme.

Ideas without power cannot grow into discourses that shape policy processes. The same could be said for the role of communication processes within discourses. More than ideas, concepts, rules of logic, or metaphors, discourse also includes the interactive processes of communication that generate and disseminate these ideas (Jones 2009). As explored in 1.4.2, relationship and systems models to thinking about the use of research in policy processes, place actors, networks and power central to why certain ideas are transferred and others not. Although research outcomes can shape and change discourses, dominant discourses can also shape ideas and new research directions, often locking institutions into specific frameworks. Dominant discourses could thus determine research outputs and which of those outputs are used in policy processes. Part of this discussion is thus how the various players with varying degrees of power and operating on different policy levels in the VAC shape the discourse.

According to Wiering and Arts (2006) discourses are relevant at two policy levels. On the first level, discourses are concerned with ideas about the organisation of a society or (as discussed in Chapter Two) ideas about the governing mode. Questions would thus convey inquiries about the perceptions of the connections between government, the market, and civil society (Wiering & Arts 2006). In the case of the VAC, different levels of government and intergovernmental relations with SADC, International Cooperating Partners (ICPs), Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), and donors shape discourses on the governing level. Such discourses would obviously surpass ideas about specific policy issues or even specific sectors, yet Wiering and Arts (2006) state that ideas on the first level may translate to the second level. With regards to the first level of discourse within the VAC system, the governing mode is complex with the VAC moving from one government extreme to the other governance extreme. Consequently, as also explored in Chapters Two and Six, power within the VAC is diffused and ideas have at times been readily transferred from the first to the second discourse level.

Ideas on the second discourse level relate to the concrete policy problems the policy arrangement aims to address. Research questions relating to second-level discourse could include the nature of the problem at

stake, how actors frame and understand the problem, problem triggers, and possible solutions (Wiering & Arts 2006). Second level discourses are strongly linked to the strategic positions of actors or the coalitions existing in the arrangement, but once again these coalitions could span both discourse levels (see Chapter Six). Wiering and Arts (2006) also state that there may be significant discrepancies between discourses on the two levels, and that the degree to which these differences can be reduced would rely on the distribution of power within the arrangement. This is a key concern in the VAC's case, as explored in this chapter when discussing the implications of formalising NVACs within national governments.

To trace the sources of the discourse on both policy levels, it is important to look into the history of the system and the kind of emergencies that encouraged the formation of the VAC. In Chapter Three I discussed the contextual factors that motivated the establishment of the VAC and led to the interpretation of vulnerability as food insecurity. These included extreme droughts during the 1990s, as well as the food security emergencies following the establishment of the VAC in 1999. As one respondent stated: "You might be aware that the inception of the NVACs... dates back to 2001 when we had that hunger crisis through the SADC region ...and that really compelled the SADC region to institute the NVACs in this part of the region" (Int. 19 to Landman 2013). Another contextual factor that shaped the VAC's vulnerability discourse was the global discourse on food security, and later also the emergence of a resilience discourse. These contextual factors influenced discourses on both the governance and day-to-day policy levels, as explored in the next two sections.

5.3 The VAC vulnerability discourse on the governing policy level

The first policy level consists of governing bodies including SADC, regional governments, UN agencies and other ICPs, NGOs, and funders. Drawing on insights from the power dimension as discussed in Chapter Six, it is important to acknowledge the influence of the main funder, the United Kingdom's (UK's) Department for International Development (DfID), and other development partners, especially UN agencies, on shaping the vulnerability discourse. The vulnerability information generated by the VAC would not exist without the financial, technical, and logistical support of funders and development partners. Efforts have been made to increase funding from governments, but this has not yet materialised: "...it's still depending on DfID, funding from DfID, but our ultimate goal is that the government should have a budget line item within the national budget to specifically fund the VAC activities, so that VACs do not always go to the donors or other well wishers, requesting for funding..." (Int. 18 to Landman 2013), and "...the donors and UN, ...they kind of have an upper hand, when dealing with governments, especially with governments that depend a lot on donations, because there it's easy to demonstrate to them that ... while we can put money into the system, we would like the system to work well" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013).

Although clear about their intention to work with and through government, discourses from development partners in the form of mandated budgets nevertheless influence VAC work. Funders and development partners have their own mandates, which determine how their budgets are spent: "...they're funded by their own budgets within these organisations, so it's really within their work plan to deepen vulnerability issues... they are fulfilling their mandates" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013) and "...the donor will decide which activities [are important to fund] with the next mandate.... So the donors will actually approach you and OCHA, they will

approach FAO³², they will say okay we've seen the stuff. We are... we have so much money available to fund it and tell me about your proposal or your activity... Why should I fund it you know?" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). Development partners would thus only provide financial, logistical and technical support for activities that are aligned with their mandate, compelling the VAC, which is dependent on external funding, to stick close to these mandates. As also explained in the introduction and Chapter Four, actors from ICPs are members of the VAC system: "But if you look at the NVACs ... they are very loose structures ... which are multi-sectoral³³, representing various organisations and in most cases when [the ICPs] come in, they come in with [representatives], but all the same these are individuals ... who represent mandates of their various organisations where they come from, like in the most cases we find that these representatives, they come in sometimes to protect their various mandates or whatever within the organisations" (Int. 2 to Landman 2013). The development mandates from some of these partners, and the way in which they have interpreted vulnerability, demonstrate a strong food insecurity focus. One development partner, who currently conducts food security analyses in 36 countries through a programme entitled Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM), defines vulnerability as follows:

Vulnerability ...is defined as the probability of an acute decline in food access or consumption levels below minimum survival needs. It is a result of both exposure to risk factors - such as drought, conflict or extreme price fluctuations - and also of underlying socio-economic processes which reduce the capacity of people's ability to cope. Thus, vulnerability can be viewed as follows:
vulnerability = exposure to risk + inability to cope.

(UN n.d.:2)

This same partner operated VAM in two of the sampled NVAC member states before their NVACs were established. After the NVACs were established, the VAM became part of the respective NVACs. Another development partner had a similar programme running in SADC member states before the establishment of the VAC system. This programme was called the Food Security Information and Vulnerability Mapping System (FIVIMS):

...that assembles, analyses and disseminates information about people who are food-insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity: who they are, where they are located, and why they are food-insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. FIVIMS is therefore an information management system – an arrangement of people, data, processes, information analysis and presentation, and information technology. These interact to support and improve daily operations of organisations engaged with the complex cross-sectoral dimensions of food insecurity and vulnerability, and helps facilitate more effective planning and decision-making.

(Agricultural Geo-reference Information System n.d.)

Replying to questions regarding the use of vulnerability information in ICP programmes, interviewees explained that ICPs mostly used the information to target beneficiaries for food aid, both in the form of food and cash transfers:

They use that particular report to address the acute or trust there are food insecurity needs, which after presenting we know how many people and in which districts and even at a traditional authority level, which tradition authority levels and how many are affected, so that is one of the key reports and the donors also wait to provide their donations to different-, it's not only WFP³⁴ anyway, because

³² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

³³ This participant uses the term multi-sectoral to refer to the VAC as a multi-agency organisation in which each agency addresses a particular sector. In the text, generally, when using the term multi-sectoral, I am specifically referring to national public administration structures consisting of multi-departments tending to different sectors.

³⁴ The World Food Programme.

the interventions can be either food based or cash and then food base that is cash transfers.

(Int. 18 to Landman 2013)

So our programmes may find out that there are programmes like the general food distribution, whereby the households are given maize, maybe for the next six months they are given maize or they are given...maybe even beans or cooking oil, depending on which organisation is intervening.

(Int. 23 to Landman 2013)

While maintaining a strong emergency food security focus, ICPs also used the information for programmes that reach beyond food aid, such as using the information to apply for funding, write contextualised proposals or invest in longer-term programmes that build community infrastructure. It is interesting to note how food aid responses relate to shielding activities in complex Socio-ecological System (SESs), as explored in 1.4.3. Longer term programmes could either represent initiatives focused on system changes pre-exposure or compensation activities post-exposure, yet international agencies tend to only get involved once shocks have exposed vulnerabilities; thus these programmes tend to be post-exposure. Other uses of vulnerability information are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

The interpretation of vulnerability by governments echo a food security focus, as one interview from an NVAC stated: “We have been reporting from the inception, from the start and we ... haven't missed a single phase in terms of reporting to SADC about the status of vulnerability of food security” (Int. 9 to Landman 2013). Although the VAC is a multi-agency organisation, the Regional Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) programme has since 2005 pushed for formalising NVACs within their respective governments, arguing that formalisation would not only result in ownership by these governments and high-level political support, but also increased funding from governments (see Chapter Seven). As a result, in countries where the NVACs are formalised in this manner, governments must sign off on all annual Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) reports before official dissemination. This has often resulted in politicised VAA information, as expressed by a number of interviewees: “...when it comes to food security monitoring, government, the national government is the lead” (Int. 6 to Landman 2013), “...during an election year a certain government will decide to inflate figures because they don't want to give to people the impression that things are not fine” (Int. 3 to Landman 2013), “...food security becomes politically charged because food insecurity can be used to attract a higher level of support...” (Int. 4 to Landman 2013), and “...it is quite politicised...there are things [politicians] don't talk about that you pick up ... some information you can disclose, some you cannot disclose... [In] the IPC³⁵ analysis [for example], you had to classify what phase the country was in and at [what] stage ... most of the provinces were actually in a phase three, which is in a crisis phase, which meant that ... people [were] starving [and] selling off their productive assets... [Even though this was the situation, government] would [disagree and say] it's actually a phase two and that [was] consensus. So [my point is that] you cannot really challenge [government]” (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). Governments thus play a significant role in the release of VAC outputs, shaping the discourse around vulnerability in the region. Statistics could be inflated to attract more funding from international donors, or could be played down if political parties want to earn votes in an election year. This is discussed in greater detail from the power dimension in Chapter Six.

³⁵ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

Before turning to the vulnerability discourse on the day-to-day policy level, it is important to add some comments on the international development of discourses around vulnerability and food security. At the time of the inception of the VAC, vulnerability had not yet been established as a separate international discourse. It was thus a term used by actors in different international development and humanitarian agencies to refer to the sensitivity of populations to whichever challenge they were working with, whether for example Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) or natural disasters. It had not yet been defined as a concept referring to general vulnerability as explained in the introduction, and not at all as a field of study.

In development and humanitarian aid discussions, the concept of vulnerability relates to that of resilience. Resilience has in recent years been applied in development and humanitarian aid discussions as a common language bridging these fields (Béné, Wood, Newsham & Davies 2012; Levine, Pain, Bailey & Fan 2012). It became a prominent concept as development and humanitarian partners became frustrated with the need for repeated massive aid efforts in the same areas of the world (Levine et al. 2012). Development agencies that have increasingly been applying the concept of resilience to develop strategies for dealing with social and environmental challenges include DfID, the World Bank, WFP, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Australian Aid (AusAID) (Béné et al. 2012), all of which are to some degree involved in the VAC. In fact, in some instances, these agencies state resilience as the key aim of long-term development and humanitarian interventions (Béné et al. 2012). Funding would thus be channelled accordingly. Interestingly, resilience as an organising concept symbolises a departure from traditional approaches and frameworks informed by linear frameworks of thinking about cause and effect that rely on top-down structures for implementation. This departure is supported by ideas from complexity theory. Consequently attempts to relate complexity concepts to development and humanitarian challenges have increased (Food Security Policy Group – FSPG 2008; Ramalingam, Jones, Reba & Young 2008; Gubbles 2011 & 2012; Levine et al. 2012). Some authors warn against the uncritical incorporation of resilience thinking into development and poverty alleviation research and practice (Béné et al. 2012, Levine et al. 2012). Resilience as a concept should therefore not be used as an all-encompassing solution to complex challenges, but instead be used for the insights it could bring to addressing these challenges.

Similarly the discourse around food security, prominent at the time of the VAC formation, has developed and changed. The five-day World Food Summit (WFS) at the FAO headquarters in Rome, attended by representative from 185 countries, took place in 1996. It was at this summit that 112 heads of state and 70 high-level officials from other countries signed the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the WFS Plan of Action, which pledged to halve the number of hungry people in the world by 2015 (FAO 1996). At the summit, food security was formally defined and the definition has since become common in food security literature: food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO 1996). This definition is marked by an emphasis on consumption, demand, and the issues of access by vulnerable people to food. The definition is most closely identified with the work of Amartya Sen in *Poverty and Famines* (1981) (FAO 2003), but should be held lightly as it has gone through a number of discursive shifts. These events in 1996 empowered the global food security discourse, and took place just three years

before the establishment of the VAC. It is thus safe to assume that with international involvement in the VAC, the strong global food security agenda would have materialised in the VAC discourse. Since 1996, new focus has been given to dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilisation (including nutrition), and stability (FAO 2008). Some even add agency to these dimensions (Rocha 2008), and new concepts such as food sovereignty have been introduced (Nyéléni 2007). The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) also recently published a report that integrates ideas of resilience into food and nutrition security strategies (Frakenberger, Constass, Nelson & Star 2014).

On the governing policy level, these international shifts in the vulnerability and food security discourses create a number of conflicting dynamics. Firstly, vulnerability has since the formation of the VAC developed as its own discourse, which means it is no longer up for grabs by anyone working in varying areas within the development and humanitarian fields. It refers to people's sensitivity to a set of challenges that go beyond singular and specific focuses such as food insecurity. Nevertheless, it allows for specification, on condition that a broader understanding of the concept is not lost. As discussed above, food security has also developed discursively. Consequently approaches to addressing food insecurity have changed. In some regions, food security has also begun to demand more attention than before, including southern Africa. FAO's 2013 *State of Food Insecurity in the World: The Multiple Dimensions of Food Insecurity* Report states that sub-Saharan Africa has only modestly improved in recent years and remains the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment (one in every five people). Sub-Saharan Africa's share in the global number of undernourished people has also increased (now 223 of 842 million undernourished people). It is still a real and urgent matter demanding immediate attention by governments and international partners in the region, and cannot simply be merged with a larger vulnerability discourse. On the governing level, although vulnerability is still interpreted as 'vulnerability to food insecurity' by some and pressing food security challenges also demand attention, international discourse is pulling vulnerability towards a broader definition. Whereas international partners had greater influence in the starting years of the VAC, the processes of formalising NVACs within governments have tilted power towards governments who have the final say in the release of information generated by the VAC. Governments, or the ruling parties within countries, have realised the political value of controlling food security statistics. On the other hand, these same governments still rely heavily on international funding and so international partners maintain a degree of power.

Consequently, and secondly, those unaware of the VAC history and discourse development may draw misinformed conclusions about what the VAC is achieving. Its name and mandate suggest that it focuses on vulnerability. The first time I was introduced to the VAC system, I could not understand why food security was the main concern in assessing vulnerability in southern Africa. Drawing on my own education, which was embedded in new discourses around vulnerability and food security between 2009–11, the VAC vulnerability discourse seemed extremely limited, as it was focusing only on food security, often with an emphasis only on the availability dimension, and also predominantly on emergency situations. This may also be the case for other consultants or international agencies coming from a much more evolved discourse of vulnerability and food security being introduced to the VAC for the first time. VAC work could quite comfortably be labelled as 'wrong' when drawing on more developed discourses, as merely focusing on emergency food insecurity situations cannot possibly reduce regional vulnerability. Obviously the VAC

vulnerability discourse is more complex, embedded in a very specific context and history, and thus needs thorough engagement before such claims can be made. The fact that food insecurity in the region remains an urgent concern also cannot be ignored. The discourse on the day-to-day policy level provides further insights on this matter.

5.4 The VAC vulnerability discourse on the day-to-day policy level

In this section, I compare the documented VAC mandate to interpretations of interviewees on the purpose of the VAC and the meaning of vulnerability. This exercise clearly illustrates that a mandate on paper is not necessarily what is acted upon. Instead, as illustrated in this section, what actors understand is what they act on.

5.4.1 The documented VAC mandate

In 1999, when the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) was initiated in Harare in Zimbabwe, it was tasked with “keeping abreast and encourage [sic] co-ordinated development in the field of *vulnerability* assessment in the southern African region” (author’s emphasis). A year later an SADC High-level Technical Consultation was held in Kariba, Zimbabwe. The 2000 Kariba Consultation is seen as a milestone in the emergence of the VAC system in southern Africa. During the consultation, an agreement on the core mandate for the RVAC was reached: “To strengthen the capacity of member states to undertake and utilise vulnerability assessments for the purpose of *food security* planning in both emergency and non-emergency situations” (author’s emphasis). Since the Kariba Consultation, the VAC has thus clearly interpreted vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity³⁶. As VAC membership included key international agencies, it may well be that this food security focus was influenced by the international food security discourse: “...don’t forget that the concept of food security, the way we think of [it] now, started mid-nineties actually... You know the summit of 1996?” (Int. 4 to Landman 2013). As demonstrated in Chapter Four, the food security emergencies in the 1990s also influenced this focus.

Only with the 2004/5 launch of the RVAA programme was there an observable (documented) discursive shift away from vulnerability referring primarily or exclusively to food insecurity, and furthermore a move away from an exclusive focus on emergency situations. This programme was launched around the time the resilience mandate began to take shape on international level, and the long-term vulnerability reduction focus of this programme might well have been influenced by the international resilience discourse. The programme offered a new mandate, which is still valid at the time of writing this thesis, stating that the purpose of the VAC is to: “...strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems in order to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions that will lead to a reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region.” Key aspects in this most recent mandate are:

- “...strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems...”

³⁶ This interpretation of vulnerability may have been true from 1999, yet judging only from these documented mandates, food security was only specified during the Kariba Consultation.

There is thus a focus on improving seemingly existing national and regional systems capable of analysing vulnerability. Vulnerability in the context of the VAC refers to vulnerability to food insecurity, although it is not clearly stated as such in the documented mandate.

- “...to inform...”

These vulnerability analysis systems should be improved to inform the three outputs discussed below. By including “...to inform...” in the mandate, the VAC system accepts a certain degree of responsibility in overseeing the actual usage of the information generated by the VAC.

- “...policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions...”

The information generated by the national and regional vulnerability analysis systems must inform three specific outputs:

- a) Policy formulation: It's important to note that the mandate does not say “the implementation of existing policies” or “policy monitoring and evaluation”, but specifically commits to informing the formulation of new policies. It is unclear whether these policies should be regional, national, or both, and thus obscures the target audience for vulnerability information.
- b) Development programmes: Development programmes are named separately, which implies that beyond policy formulation, vulnerability information should also be used to inform the specifics of programmes that focus on development. Once again, it is unclear whether these programmes will be regional, national, or both, and thus who the target audiences are.
- c) Emergency interventions: Since its inception, vulnerability information has been applied to inform the responses of partners who work in humanitarian emergencies. The mandate keeps the VAC bound to this original system output.

- “...that will lead to a reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region.”

The ultimate purpose or outcome of generating vulnerability information and supporting its usage in the above-mentioned outputs is to reduce vulnerability in the SADC region. This part of the mandate calls for some form of monitoring and evaluation system, yet it could also be that it was assumed that continuous analysis of vulnerability would also indicate any changes in regional vulnerability. To date there has not been a dedicated study to compile VAC outputs to analyse vulnerability trends in the region since the VAC's inception in 1999. Some annual synthesis reports did mention that some populations have been vulnerable for a long time without providing specifics: “Some of the affected areas have remained the same for a long period indicating chronic vulnerability and high levels of poverty” (RVAA 2012:vi).

The documented VAC mandate is thus relatively clear, except on a few issues, such as: an explicit definition of vulnerability; whether vulnerability information should inform national or regional policies and programmes (or both); and to what degree the VAC system accepts responsibility for the usage of its information. These issues are not purposely elaborated on or explained in any of the reviewed VAC documents and so may have been overlooked, or certain assumptions might have been made about how people would interpret them. Judging on VAC outputs, the assumption that vulnerability means vulnerability to food insecurity becomes clear. Although not stated in the mandate, the document containing the mandate identifies three

main RVAA programme clients: the SADC Secretariat, SADC member states and ICPs, which could be the target audiences for VAC information.

Before turning to findings from the semi-structured interviews to explore members' interpretation of vulnerability and the purpose of the VAC, one comment by an interviewee, although singular, should not be disregarded: "...there's nothing wrong with this [mandate] except to say we needed to fast track this VAC, so ...this VAC [could speak in one voice]... now we are carrying that mandate, but it was not formalised in a manner that we would have loved. It has not received that support, the full support from the departmental level, presidency level, all stakeholders involved to the level whereby this is a well-known and well-approved mandate" (Int. 9 to Landman 2013). Although the mandate is reported to have emerged out of a comprehensive three-step consultation process with all VAC members (see Chapter Four), this particular interviewee felt that the mandate had to be rushed as part of a process to establish a more formal structure to the VAC. As a consequence, according to this interviewee, it has not been well-considered or supported by members. This interviewee's comment is a clear illustration of how policies and mandates on paper are not necessarily what is acted upon. Instead, as discussed below, what actors understand is what they act on.

5.4.2 VAC members' understanding of the VAC purpose

Figure 17 contains a number of key quotations, highlighting aspects of the understanding shared by VAC members. None of the interviewees quoted or referred to the documented mandate as the purpose of the VAC. It is clear from the quotes in Figure 17 that most interviewees insisted that the focus of the VAC was not an all-encompassing vulnerability as defined in the thesis introduction, but instead vulnerability aligned to food insecurity. Nutrition was also sometimes added, as interviewees referred to food and nutrition insecurity. Respondents also mentioned that food insecurity could be both acute and chronic.

Some interviewees argued that the focus of the VAC was livelihood vulnerability, yet continued to explain that a livelihood focus offered a broader view on issues that ultimately influence the food security of communities. A livelihoods approach has thus not replaced food security, but has been employed to produce broader food security-related information. Some other issues that were mentioned under the livelihood umbrella included poverty, which was used as a synonym for livelihoods in some interviews, and vulnerability in others. Education, health, and water and sanitation were also mentioned in relation to livelihoods.

Some respondents said that the purpose of the VAC was purely to produce analysed vulnerability information. Few respondents said the purpose was to inform policy, programming, and monitoring, and more said it was to inform interventions, mostly emergency in nature. Very few respondents said that it was to inform both emergency and longer-term planning interventions. Some respondents also mentioned vulnerability information contributing to national early warning information systems, which is interesting considering that Interviewee 8 claimed that the VAC was established to supplement the Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU). A few respondents also claimed that the purpose of the VAC was only to coordinate assessments around the above-mentioned focuses, but that the usage of generated information and its application was not part of the VAC's mandate or responsibility. Everyone agreed that the VAC is not an

Figure 17: Quotes relating to the purpose of the VAC and key aspects of the system's shared understanding of the focus and purpose of the VAC



implementation body and that government and development partners were to apply the information in their interventions.

The general interpretation of the VAC's purpose is incongruent with the documented mandate. Firstly the mandate seems to refer to general vulnerability, whereas the general understanding amongst VAC members leans specifically towards vulnerability to food insecurity. Secondly, the mandate demands a certain degree of responsibility in stating that vulnerability information needs to inform development programmes, emergency response, and policy formation, whereas the general understanding is that the purpose is merely to generate the information and not to advocate its usage or ensure its application. The general understanding also seems to be that vulnerability information should be used to inform interventions, mostly emergency in nature, and yet the mandate also calls for informing programmes and developing policies. Lastly, and perhaps most profoundly, the general understanding completely overlooked the overarching purpose of reducing regional vulnerability as committed to in the mandate.

Although there was consensus that the main purpose of the VAC is to generate information about food security and related issues for use by government and development partners in interventions, there were also more critical reflections on the interpretation of the VAC's purpose. Firstly, although agreeing that the general understanding of vulnerability in the VAC related to food security, one respondent expressed that other issues such as HIV/AIDS should also be considered in vulnerability assessments: "The communities are vulnerable to so many things beyond food security...such as, well there's HIV and AIDS... We need to focus [on] more than just food security... I actually think that we have food security partly because of HIV, so HIV is quite a vulnerability [needs] to be on their mind" (Int. 17 to Landman 2013). This is an extremely important insight, as it shows that the understanding of vulnerability to food insecurity is critically engaged in and understood as influenced by more than just the four dimensions of food security.

Secondly, a number of respondents felt that the VAC is ineffective in reducing vulnerability to food insecurity due to its restricted focus on acute vulnerability, neglecting chronic vulnerability: "...the VACs have always tried to ... avoid ... presenting strong evidence ... on long-term issues. Their focuses have mainly been short-term. I know there is now this talk about moving to resilience, long-term and Anri, the major challenge for most of SADC member states at the moment is not the question of short-term food needs. In my opinion, in the countries where I've worked it is more chronic" (Int. 7 to Landman 2013), "...I see that the VAC has not been doing ... the chronic issues, it has been mainly focussing on the acute, it means even the assessments that are there, they are not really tackling the chronic related issues" (Int. 18 to Landman 2013), "So it's just food aid: Is it one million, is it two point two [million hungry people]? We're still going to do that. Are they less vulnerable now? [No], we're going to do it again next year, so it's not serving – based on the mandate – it's not serving any of them, I think. I mean measuring the number of vulnerable – that's not actually fixing it" (Int. 24 to Landman 2013), and "...if you're going to respond to the short term, ... it means that they are constantly going to be vulnerable because you just...you're not looking at the roots of this vulnerability and addressing them. You're just looking at that season, and how many people don't have food, let's just give them food, but next season the same people are going to be food insecure... and more even, so how is it exactly addressing the issue of vulnerability?" (Int. 31 to Landman 2013). Although still focusing mostly on

vulnerability as food insecurity, it is clear that these respondents find the acute focus limiting in addressing the overarching purpose of reducing regional vulnerability to food insecurity.

Lastly, it was expressed that although the VAC system has done much to inform emergency interventions and the development programmes of ICPs (note: not of governments), national policy has been neglected:

[The NVAC] has done much to inform emergency interventions, and in some cases development programmes of ICPs, but ... it still has far to go to inform national policy... I think that the vision is not bad in itself, but I do not think that when you look at government policy that the VAC has the capacity practically... I think policy really is about government...I think the VAC needs to find better ways of linking up with the implementing ministries and in this case specifically, I think with the Department of Disaster Management affairs...The VAC can play an active role in providing, feeding information, technical information and analysis into the process of developing their resilience policy or any other policy that might be required, which the VAC would provide necessary or useful inputs for.

(Int. 17 to Landman 2013)

Except for highlighting the issue that VAC information is not informing national policy, this respondent's comment points to another issue. The respondent states that the VAC should specifically link up with the Department of Disaster Management affairs. As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the overlooked governance issues is risk, uncertainty, or incertitude more broadly. Although one would expect this department to do well in risk management, I've also argued that attempting to remove uncertainty and incertitude is not possible, and it would be best to employ strategies to deal with these issues. Effective evaluation and monitoring systems would enable governments to constantly adapt policies and programmes. With that said, this respondent also refers to a resilience policy (discussed in detail in Chapter Seven), which could arguably begin to increase populations' capacity to adapt to shocks. Another respondent also expressed concern for the lack of vulnerability information usage in government policies: "The purpose of the [NVAC] is ... to advocate, so it's not just collecting information for information's sake, but to turn that information into policy decisions, give it to the policy makers" (Int. 30 to Landman 2013). Clearly, these respondents feel that informing national policy remains a neglected output that needs to be addressed by the VAC system.

In summary, it could thus be said that the official mandate of the VAC and the general understanding of the purpose of the VAC are incongruent. The former seems to focus on vulnerability in general, as it does not specify vulnerability to food insecurity, whilst the latter centres on food security and related issues. The mandate calls for the strengthening of vulnerability systems to inform development programmes, policy formulation and information systems, whilst the general understanding is that the VAC should primarily generate (timely) food security (and related) information to inform interventions by governments and development partners, mostly emergency in nature. Finally, most VAC members overlook the overarching goal of reducing regional vulnerability (whether general or specifically to food insecurity), as committed to in the mandate. VAC members also expressed some concerns with the general understanding of the VAC purpose, including that it should look beyond food insecurity, focus on chronic issues if it is to address regional vulnerability, and that the VAC system should actively do more to inform national policy formulation.

5.4.3 VAC members' interpretation of the notion of vulnerability (and food security)

A shortcoming of this research is that that specific questions around the definition of vulnerability were never asked. Clarity on this matter is therefore challenging, yet discussions around the purpose of the VAC system are fairly useful for deducing VAC members' interpretations of vulnerability. It is important to note that these interviewees were not contemplating the meaning of vulnerability when responding to questions about the VAC's purpose. Their responses were associated with the purpose of the VAC, which—as demonstrated earlier—not everyone has engaged with critically. One fortunate outcome of this weakness of the study is that respondents' interpretations of the VAC's purpose relate mostly to work being realised by the VAC, and thus interpretations about vulnerability deduced from these discussions are grounded in materialised outputs and outcomes, escaping abstract, ideal, and unrelated definitions of vulnerability. From the discussion above and Figure 17 it is possible to identify five main interpretations of vulnerability: a) It is aligned purely with acute food insecurity; b) It is aligned with acute food and nutrition insecurity; c) It is aligned with both acute and chronic food (and nutrition) insecurity; d) It is aligned purely with livelihood insecurity (or poverty), with food security playing a central role in livelihood security; and e) It is aligned with livelihood insecurity (or poverty) as far as livelihoods (or poverty) influence food (and nutrition) insecurity. Assessing issues such as environmental degradation, climate change, and adaptation were not prominently discussed as part of the VAC's purpose, although some interviewees claimed that VAC information was used to inform environmental programmes (see Chapter Seven).

The VAC system thus principally and strongly relates vulnerability to food insecurity and its related issues. As mentioned before, this could be explained by the influential partners who directed the establishment of the VAC and were at the time of the inception of the VAC participating in an international food security discourse. The contextual events in the form of food crises that haunted the region in the early years of the VAC also influenced the food security focus. Two respondents reinforced the importance of the food security focus in their interviews, pointing to the fact that it is still a pressing matter: "...the fact that [the NVACs] talk about the most, the most critical issue: They talk about food security. It's both sensitive, but very critical, so I think that, that in a way is a strength for the VAC, which means they talk about relevant issues...since they are dealing with the question of ... vulnerability aligned to food security and livelihoods" (Int. 7 to Landman 2013) and "...you will not find products that ... are looking at, you know, sort of long-term issues, ... incorporating some of the new science that is emerging. I think this has not been the major thrust, ... it is has not been sort of the centrepiece of the work that we're doing, [which] is to try and ...listen to the eight million people that are not food secure, try and mobilise resources so that they get food" (Int. 31 to Landman 2013). Interestingly this discourse, vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity, has become formalised within the VAC system: "...the government basically has been looking at food security as a major thing. It affects the largest part of the population and I think it's that bias basically...I think beyond that I wouldn't say that there's any specific reason why there's been this bias, but you know that you know technical bias is of that nature also come, they make themselves in a way, so the bias only reinforces the bias" (Int. 17 to Landman 2013). An early focus on food security thus called for expertise and technical assistance related to food security, and with time this has become part of the collective memory of the system and emerged as the rules of the game. This is further unpacked in Chapter Seven.

Before delving into how the VAC interprets triggers of vulnerability, it is important to consider how the VAC system understands food security. If vulnerability is interpreted as vulnerability to food insecurity and its related issues, a critical reflection of VAC interpretations of food insecurity is essential. As mentioned before, the formal definition of food security should be held lightly. People will act on what they understand, not necessarily what is formally documented. Interviewees demonstrated their comprehension of food security in the semi-structured interviews. An aspect that came up regularly was that the history of food security in the VAC is rooted in the availability dimension. Even within this dimension an understanding developed over time, shifting from a focus on national crop estimates to also considering imports and exports, and eventually to the quantities of food each person consumes: “So there are places where up until now, when they talk food security they still just talk of availability” (Int. 4 to Landman 2013), “What I remember Anri from the disseminations last year, was that some of the VACs were just presenting crop assessments. You know? They just talk about production...what needs to be exported or imported?” (Int. 13 to Landman 2013), “...the overall understanding of people when the assessments are done or when they do their VAC [work], in people’s minds they’ll only be thinking of food shortages or food availability. Hence the outcomes of the assessments in terms of use and relevance have mainly to do with ... food availability” (Int. 24 to Landman 2013). The availability understanding also reflects in the planning of VAC assessments: “...we are asking people how many bags of maize they would harvest in a year or something and what that translates into – the kilocalorie requirement and for this part of the region we use 2100 kilocalories. So we have to make calculations. For each and every –, each and every food item that they give us, we have to make a calculation to see what percentage of the kilocalorie this one is providing because at least we won’t –, it’s our hope that everyone gets at least a 100% of the 2100 kilocalories” (Int. 14 to Landman 2013).

Food security discourse seems to have progressed, however. There were a number of discussions focusing on the importance of looking beyond the availability dimension of food security, to also include the access dimension, and its link to livelihoods and market assessments: “...you’d appreciate that the major problem in terms of people’s food insecurity is mainly because of their accessibility, so it’s not necessarily because the country does not have food, but it’s mainly because there are issues of access. So it ...then becomes very important for us to understand people’s livelihoods” (Int. 1 to Landman 2013), “...the VAC does not just look at the food availability, but ... there’s the food access ...[when] we talk about access we talk about people who can be able to access food from the markets and when we are talking of markets it means we can be talking of price. So we project the prices, price increases” (Int. 14 to Landman 2013), “...there are some areas that are food insecure not because the people are vulnerable³⁷, ...[but] because they can’t access the [agricultural] inputs [for production], they can’t access, so we’re advising the government you know you need to target these people” (Int. 29 to Landman 2013), and “...it’s not strictly just looking at there are a lot of different indicators that have to be taken into account over and above how much food was produced and how much food people need. You need to understand their whole livelihood (Int. 8 to Landman 2013)”.

Some respondents also mentioned the four dimensions or pillars of food security, which demonstrates that at least discursively the dimensions are active within the VAC system: “Remember if you may record a

³⁷ When using the term vulnerable here, the interviewee is specifically referring to poverty and so equating being poor with being vulnerable, and explaining food security from a livelihoods perspective.

definition of food security, it's not only about how much food we've produced, but it's about food availability, food accessibility, distribution and utilisation... Then you can say whether someone is ... food secure or not. So you have to look into all those pillars..." (Int. 9 to Landman 2013), and "...these three pillars of food security plus the... stability dimension... You know the whole dimension of going down to the household level and up to the nutrition aspects of an individual. It's still a pothole that has to be really fought to get people to understand that" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013).

Recognising that food security is more than just food availability naturally calls for a greater set of indicators: "...we have to acknowledge that there is a demand for a broader set of data in order to make better sense of food insecurity and better informed policy... we need to bring in all these elements from... long-term global, environmental change and implications and the impacts [of] urbanisation and a number of specific hazards and threats to food security in the region" (Int. 5 to Landman 2013). Respondents also expressed that although they understand that food security can be both acute and chronic, the VAC has focused mainly on the former: "I think for the past years we have been concentrating on the acute, which is transitory food security situation, looking at the current, the present and just projecting ... how many people are we food insecure ... we can have maybe good harvest or national production... can suggest a very huge surplus, but there are still say deficits at household level, so [the] VAC's role is to go conduct the assessment... identify those households that are food insecure, because they didn't produce due to different reasons...whether they need assistance or whether they'll be able to cope... so mainly the VAC conducts the food security assessment and it recommends whether ... those people will cope or not, or [whether] there'll be a number of people that will be food insecure, [and] need the assistance" (Int. 18 to Landman 2013)". These interviewees thus recognise the need to put into practice their understanding of chronic food insecurity: "There should be deeper analysis to understand the chronic food insecurity. The ones that have been every year...they're always food insecure. It's due to other chronic issues" (Int. 18 to Landman 2013). The fact that these interviewees call for a greater set of indicators to assess a broader understanding of food security and its related chronic issues also points to the fact that these indicators have not been incorporated yet.

There is thus a general understanding that food security is about more than just its availability and access dimensions, or emergency food insecurity situations, yet it seems the VAC is struggling to materialise assessments that also focus on the utilisation dimension (bringing in nutrition assessments), the stability dimension (assessing food systems' vulnerability to shocks), and the chronic issues related to food insecurity. Furthermore, as has been demonstrated by the discourses about vulnerability to food insecurity and food security as mainly concerned with the availability dimension, certain perceptions of phenomena become embedded in a system, perpetuating a specific understanding by the actions taken to address them. These discourses are translated into rules guiding future behaviour, which are the institutions discussed in Chapter Seven. It is important to make transparent the already-existing discourses in the VAC system that offer a broader and more integrated understanding of food security, allowing members to make critical and informed decisions around the interpretations of vulnerability and food security, and ways to address these.

5.4.4 The drivers of food insecurity

Another interesting discourse on the day-to-day policy level is how the VAC has come to identify the drivers

of food insecurity. In the most recently accessible RVAA Synthesis Report, it was reported that:

The total number of food insecure population in the Region, during 2012/13 marketing season, has increased in all countries compared to 2011/12 marketing season except in Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia. Some of the affected areas have remained the same for a long period indicating chronic vulnerability and high levels of poverty. The current analysis shows a 27% increase in the number of population from 4.3 million during the 2011/12 marketing season to 5.4 million during the 2012/13 marketing season.

(RVAA 2012:vi)

With its understanding of vulnerability, the VAC obviously has very specific ideas about the causes and drivers of food insecurity. Mentioned at least 13 times across interviews, from most- to least-discussed, these included: climate change, poverty, drought, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, floods, and environmental degradation (see Table 9 in 4.3.1). Less frequently mentioned drivers—only four times or fewer—included cyclones, disease outbreaks, earthquakes, unemployment, urbanisation, orphan-headed households (due to HIV/AIDS), and pests. Of these, a number of shocks can be identified: climate change, droughts, floods, cyclones, disease outbreaks, earthquakes, and pests. The others seem to be factors that are contributing to and perpetuating a state of chronic vulnerability, and could be referred to as drivers: poverty, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, environmental degradation, unemployment, and orphan-head households. It is important to understand the difference between shocks and drivers, as different policy approaches are required to address them (see differentiation in 1.4.1). It is also interesting to note that of all the shocks and drivers mentioned, the VAC has only incorporated poverty (through livelihood assessments) and weather patterns (cyclones, droughts, and floods) as they affect food production into its assessments. Although climate change has emerged as a discourse (see the following section), it has not translated into assessments yet.

From these discussions it should be clear that the general purpose of the VAC is understood to be generating information about the vulnerability in the region, which in turn is understood as vulnerability to food insecurity and related issues. Reports are compiled about food security vulnerability and disseminated to governments and development partners who are expected to use them to mostly inform emergency relief programmes. A more detailed discussion of dissemination strategies and the programmes using vulnerability information is available in Chapter Seven. Although an integral part of its mandate, the VAC has not made broad concerted efforts to ensure that the information it produces inform national policy formulation. Reasons for the lack of concerted efforts are explored in Chapter Seven, and include that information about emergencies is usually demanded and does not require dissemination strategies, and that trend analysis of information about emergencies is only just picking up in the VAC. Such trend analysis has not been compiled into any formal documents yet. There have only been four policies across the region that can claim to have emerged from VAC-produced information (see Chapter Seven). The first relates to food security and nutrition, the second to a public works policy, and the third and fourth to disaster risk reduction and resilience building. Only the first two have been finalised and are currently being implemented. The last two were still in draft form at the time of writing this thesis. These policies are discussed in more detail from the institutions dimension in Chapter Seven.

5.4.5 The new climate change discourse

As previously mentioned, the RVAA programme was extended for a second time until the end of 2016 with a

new emphasis on climate change. One of the first interviews I conducted in 2013 took place just before a climate change seminar in May 2013. The interviewee explained that with the new RVAA programme focus, it was necessary to explore how to link climate change and livelihood data. As DfID funded the RVAA programme, it was putting pressure on the VAC to incorporate climate change into vulnerability assessments. This may well be the manifestation of the international resilience discourse on the second policy level, as the resilience and climate change discourses tend to be integrated. The resilience discourse as applied to socio-ecological systems originated in the nature conservation and ecology literature in the 1970s, whereas the climate change discourse cuts across fields of study. At the time VACs had not yet been able to integrate climate change indicators into vulnerability assessments:

...there's a programme right, there's a RVAA programme supported by DfID, which is actually supporting VACs for now, so within the programme itself it's funded within the bigger platform of ... programmes within DfID. So it's kind of also supposed to support or build capacities of the NVACs to respond to climate change issues, it's coming in also with the renovation that the VACs have not been able to capture the long term issues of what they want to, so we have organised this thing, this workshop... at the climate change seminar] they are basically going to be looking at issues of methodologies. How can we unpack [climate change]? How can we separate the climate change impacts from the many other impacts that communities are facing?

(Int. 3 to Landman 2013).

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced additional theory related to the discourse dimension in the PAA, explaining that there are two levels of discourse: the first level concerns discourses on the governing level of the policy arrangement, and the second the more practical on-the-ground considerations of the policy issues at hand. The point of answering the research question from this angle is to identify blockages to and catalysts for the interpretation of vulnerability that translates into the rules that actors use to apply power and resources to inform policy aiming to reduce regional vulnerability. SADC governments, as well as funders and development partners forming part of the VAC system, shape vulnerability discourse on the first level. The VAC's dependence on resources and technical support from funders and development partners, as well as these entities' membership in the VAC, have meant that first level discourse also shapes vulnerability discourses on the second level. The influence of first level discourse on the second level was greater in the early years of the VAC, but with the push for institutionalisation and embedding NVACs in national governments, funders and development partners have lost some of their power (this is further explored in Chapter Six). Governments, or the political parties elected to govern, have learned how to use food security statistics to their political advantage, which legitimises and favours the use of research in policy, yet has also slowed down possible discursive shifts from food security to resilience. The discourse at the first level originated from an understanding that vulnerability referred to vulnerability to food insecurity. However, since the inception of the VAC, two international discourses have emerged that have separated ideas around food security and vulnerability on the first policy level. The discourse and mandates of development partners, including the main funder of the VAC, DfID, have moved towards broader ideas of vulnerability and resilience, which are incongruent with the understanding of vulnerability on the second policy level.

On the second policy level, the general understanding of vulnerability continues to strongly relate to food security, although there are also ideas around nutrition and livelihoods as they relate to food security. This understanding is obviously rooted in the VAC's history, which included both severe food security emergencies and influential partners that related vulnerability to food security. Consequently, the VAC has mainly produced information on the emergency food security focus to inform the emergency response programmes of governments and development partners. Although governments have applied this information to select beneficiaries of existing policies and programmes, the information has only informed the formation of four policies. Two of these are active, one focusing on food and nutrition security and the other on developing infrastructure. The use of information in the formation of the latter is based on only two interviewees' accounts. The two inactive policies relate to disaster risk management and resilience, but their development has been slow. The impact of these policies on the reduction of regional vulnerability has not been established. The focus of latest phase of the RVAA programme is climate change and other contributors of poverty, but since 2012 the VAC has been unable to translate the climate change discourse into actual assessments. Ultimately it is necessary to expose these discourse dynamics and allow VAC members to critically engage with these issues. As food insecurity is still a pressing and very real concern in southern Africa, the VAC could choose to continue a focus on its related issues, yet broaden its understanding of food security. The pull from international members, who have the resources and have moved on with the vulnerability discourse to arrive at a broader understanding, may not allow this as the VAC evolves.

Chapter Six: Actors and power

6.1 Introduction

Although the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) actors have already been identified in preceding discussions, this chapter formally introduces them and explores the coalitions that have formed within the policy arrangement. As the power and resources dimension is very closely related to the actors and coalitions dimension, this chapter combines the two dimensions. The point of answering the research question from these two dimensions is to investigate how actors and power have shaped policy outputs and to identify the blockages and catalysts these dimensions have brought to the formation of policies that aim to reduce regional vulnerability. The concepts of actors and coalitions are theoretically placed and developed within the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA). Three types of power are introduced: relational, dispositional and structural power. Relational power refers to the achievements of actors through interactions that manifest through policy innovations. Dispositional power is about how rules and resources determine the positioning of agents within a policy arrangement. Structural power concerns the structuring of a policy arrangement and relates to political modernisation. A power diagram of the VAC is offered to visually represent not only the actors and their roles within the VAC system, but also their relative size and power. Finally, I explore how this power arrangement came to be, how it is maintained, and its implications for policy formulation.

6.2 Actors and coalitions in the PAA

Liefferink (2006) offers some insight into analysing policy arrangements from the actor perspective. The first step would be to identify all relevant actors and their influences in the policy process, either through policy documents or in the field, or through a combination of the two. Actors' influence is determined by their coalitions and power within the arrangement. Liefferink thus proposes clustering actors that fulfil similar roles, and distinguishing between central and more peripheral actors. Drawing on VAC documents and semi-structured interviews, I present the VAC in this manner in Figure 21. The figure identifies the actors, presents their size relative to other actors, organises them into their respective roles and demonstrates their relative power.

Once key actors and power relations within the arrangement have been established, Liefferink (2006) advises that these be clustered within coalitions. Based on the work done by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1994), coalitions are determined by actors' shared views. However, Liefferink (2006) distinguishes shared views from what are labelled as 'discourses' in the PAA. He argues that discourses refer to storylines or narratives most evident within an arrangement. The vulnerability discourse explored in Chapter Five is used as baseline to identify various coalitions. Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004) explain that policy coalitions consist of actors who share resources and interpretations of discourses, consequently having (more or less) similar goals, which they try and reach by applying their resources and power in the context of the rules of the policy arrangement. Some coalitions may support the dominant discourses and rules, whilst others might challenge them.

6.3 Actors in the VAC

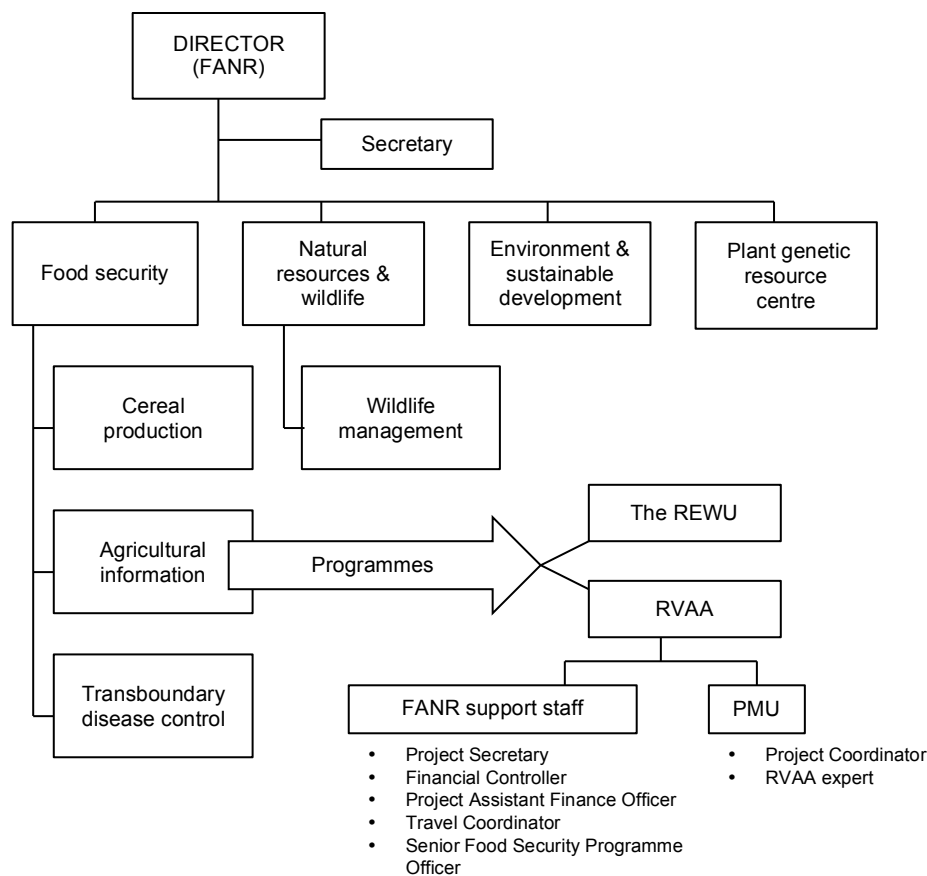
Although a myriad of actors constitute VAC operations, I focus on the most influential ones. After extensive engagements with the VAC system over the course of three years, I selected these actors as the most influential in shaping discourses, determining the flow of resources through certain formal and informal rules, and thus supporting or blocking certain VAC outputs. These actors include: the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR); the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC); the National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs); governments of institutionalised NVACs; governments of volunteering NVACs; the Regional Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme Management Unit (PMU); Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) consultants; International Cooperating Partners (ICPs); Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs); and funders. They are briefly introduced here before exploring some of the coalitions that exist between them. Power relations (relational, dispositional, and structural) are more thoroughly discussed in a separate section later in this chapter.

In the thesis introduction I refer to the emergence of the SADC FANR as being part of SADC's restructuring in the early 2000s. The SADC FANR replaced a former system consisting of coordinating units responsible for specific technical areas now assigned to FANR. These units were located in four countries: Malawi (inland fisheries, wildlife, and forestry), Botswana (livestock production and animal disease control, and agricultural research and training), Namibia (marine fisheries) and Zimbabwe (overall coordination). Today FANR accounts for more than half of all SADC programmes, and includes programmes on food security, crop development, livestock production and animal disease control, natural resource management (of forestry, wildlife and fisheries), and agricultural and natural resource research and training (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa – FARA 2014). According to official VAC documents, SADC FANR members responsible for the VAC system include a Senior Food Security Programme Officer, a Project Coordinator (also forming the PMU), a Project Secretary, an SADC Financial Controller, a Project Assistant Finance Officer, an SADC Travel Coordinator, and an RVAA Expert (also forming part of the PMU) (see Figure 18). Considering the VAC's vulnerability discourse, it is also interesting to note the placement of the RVAA programme within FANR; it is part of agricultural information under food security. As discussed in the power section in this chapter, this kind of structural power will influence how actors are positioned within the policy arrangement and ultimately how they interact with each other, consequently leading to very specific outputs. This structural power also shapes how the VAC interprets vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity. Due to access constraints, no one from the SADC FANR was interviewed during the research process. I did not travel to Botswana where FANR members are based and at the 2013 AOM in South Africa, these members did not have the time to be interviewed. Details about the SADC FANR were collected from VAC documents, the FARA website, and a few confirming comments made by interviewees, all of which are summarised in this section.

I have also explained the constitution of the RVAC and NVACs in the introductory chapter, both including members from a variety of ICPs and regional or national governing bodies. The RVAC was the first formal structure within the VAC. The NVACs were created afterwards in the early 2000s to roll out food emergency assessments in some member states. From its inception, the RVAC was a guiding unit within the larger

VAC. The objective of the RVAC was to monitor and promote coordinated developments in the field of vulnerability assessments and risk mapping, offering the already existing Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU) insight into the impacts of shocks on the region's most vulnerable. It provided a platform for better coordination among governments and key technical agencies involved in vulnerability monitoring and emergency responses. An early configuration of the RVAC included representatives of the SADC FANR; SADC REWU; SADC Database Project; the World Food Programme (WFP); Save the Children, United Kingdom (SC-UK) the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) (Marsland 2004).

Figure 18: Organogram of FANR showing the RVAA programme and its actors



Source: Adapted from <http://www.sadc.int/sadc-secretariat/directorates/office-deputy-executive-secretary-regional-integration/food-agriculture-natural-resources/>.

NVAC configurations differ across the region within different countries. The membership of an NVAC depends on whether or not a particular NVAC is formalised within government structures, in which department it is formalised, and which ICPs are most active in that member state. For the purpose of this research, five NVACs were considered out of a total of eleven: The ZimVAC (Zimbabwe), MVAC (Malawi), SwaziVAC (Swaziland), SAVAC (South Africa), and SETSAN (Mozambique). As the roles and power of national governments within the NVACs are determined by whether or not the NVACs are formalised within government structures, governments are split into those with formal NVACs (Zimbabwe and Malawi) and those with volunteering NVACs (Swaziland and South Africa). These NVACs were selected during the first round of interviews with RVAC members and VAC consultants. Interviewees were asked to name four to five

NVACs that would offer a reasonably comprehensive overview of VAC activities. These five NVACs do not represent the entire VAC, but offer important insights into VAC operations. The Malawian Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC), Zimbabwean Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC), and Mozambican Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) are three of the oldest NVACs in the system. The MVAC secretariat is embedded within the Malawian Department of Economic Planning and Development, whilst the ZimVAC is housed within the Food and Nutrition Council (FNC) under the Presidency in Zimbabwe. SETSAN is housed within the Ministry of Agriculture.

The MVAC is an interesting case, since according to a number of interviewed RVAC members as well as MVAC members, it used to be the strongest NVAC, but then lost many staff members to ICPs and the PMU. This is the perception of interviewed members and is not based on set criteria. Furthermore, interviewees felt that the MVAC is still a strong NVAC, but has been surpassed by the ZimVAC in terms of the range of indicators included in assessments, actual VAA outputs, and its influence in government. The ZimVAC is the NVAC with influence at the highest political level. It has managed to motivate the establishment of the FNC, which focuses exclusively on issues around food and nutrition security; reflecting on Chapter Four and the problems that surround defining vulnerability as food and nutrition security, the ZimVAC is a typical example of how this definition has been institutionalised. It is also the first NVAC to unambiguously influence a national policy with the Food and Nutrition Policy of Zimbabwe. According to interviews, SETSAN has been the most successful NVAC at dealing with natural disasters. It is another NVAC that, according to interviewees from other NVACs, seems to have lost some of its initial ability; however, it may also be that SETSAN has begun to operate increasingly independently and that the VAC system is not aware of its operations. Communication with SETSAN was challenging, as all the interviewees are first-language Portuguese, yet one interviewee in particular was adamant that I properly understand the SETSAN structure and operations (Int. 9 to Landman 2013). Based on just this one interview, it seems that SETSAN is still functioning effectively and has recently been awarded more authority to oversee food and nutrition related programmes within the Mozambican government. The power arrangements between these three NVACs are substantiated and explored in more detail later in this chapter.

The South African Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SAVAC) and Swaziland Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SwaziVAC) have not yet been institutionalised. According to interviewees, the SAVAC is in the process of being formalised either within the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) or within the Department of National Development and Planning. One interviewee situated within the Information Unit of the Subsistence Agriculture Directorate of the Food Security Chief Directorate within DAFF, working to formalise SAVAC, stated that they also approached Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) to house the SAVAC, but Stats SA declined (Int. 1 to Landman 2013). With the help of external consultants, the SAVAC volunteers have successfully completed a feasibility study in 2010 to establish whether the Food Security Information and Vulnerability Mapping System (FIVIMS) project implemented in the country at the time should be replaced by an NVAC. Finding that an NVAC would aid in better integrating existing information systems to present a vulnerability picture in the country, the livelihoods zoning mapping process of the Household Economy Approach (HEA) was launched and successfully completed with the help of a consultant at the beginning of 2013. It consisted of the HEA baseline, which is “[t]he quantified analysis of

sources of food and income and of expenditure for households in each wealth group over a defined reference period" (SC-UK & FEG Consulting 2008:xi). In interviews with SAVAC volunteers it was explained that a five-year strategic plan was currently underway to further support the formalisation of SAVAC. The purpose of the SAVAC would be an information-generating unit to help monitor food security and livelihood-related programmes implemented under the most recent 2030 plan of the National Planning Commission (NPC): "I think it would mainly serve as the information generating structure... Like I was telling you about the NPC and its 2030 plan, which needs to be monitored... So if SAVAC comes now and say we are able to generate food security related information, we are able to monitor people's livelihood annually or whatever... that would ... be very useful for the policy makers, because the programmes that are being implemented, they do need to be monitored" (Int. 1 to Landman 2013).

The SwaziVAC has been struggling for years with the formalisation process: "...back in 2002, [there] was ... a meeting of ... council ministers ... on food, agriculture and national resources [for] kind of establishing the VAC system... some legislation was developed for the institutional set up of the Swaziland vulnerability assessment committee ... it is a technical unit of disaster management... currently we do not have full-time focal persons within the disaster management, but we are working ... as guided by the legislation, which is called the ... Disaster Management Act of 2006... It's an office that has failed to establish over the last six years, since the legislation was propagated" (Int. 33 to Landman 2013). Nevertheless, the SwaziVAC has been functional, producing annual vulnerability reports with the support of SwaziVAC volunteers: "Swaziland is important [as a case study]... because it's ... being operated outside the VAC secretariat. The VAC secretariat is not, it's not functional, but it's working by being facilitated by various individuals from various institutions" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). The data gathered about the SwaziVAC was not sufficient to justly present it next to the other cases. I draw on some of the interviewees for insights on power, however.

The PMU was established to coordinate and implement the RVAA programme. It consists of a Project Coordinator and an RVAA Expert, who also formed part of the SADC FANR (as shown in Figure 18). As one of the outcomes of the RVAA Programme, a PMU had to be established under the overall supervision of the SADC FANR. The PMU reports directly to the FANR, and as will be discussed later, once the RVAA programme is completed, the FANR will oversee work currently tended to by the PMU. The PMU is currently tasked with providing technical and financial support to new and existing NVACs. There was a 14-month slippage between the approval of the RVAA and the launch of the RVAA PMU in August 2006. The unit started to function in December 2006 and priority was given to technical support to member states. A full complement of staff was only in place by November 2007, including a Project Coordinator and RVAA Expert.

External consultants are often contracted by the PMU and NVACs to produce VAC outputs specifically relating to the RVAA programme. Often these experts come to the VAC through ICPs, but there are also cases where government officials become part of NVACs, are then headhunted by ICPs and begin to work as consultants. Boundaries between actors and their roles are often blurry. External consultants work on a range of projects including reviews, research into specific issues, terms of references, work plans, training, etc. A small number of consultants are also contracted by the PMU, and so for the purpose of this article are grouped as part of the PMU.

According to reviewed VAC documents, ICPs consist of the various international agencies that contribute capacity and technical assistance to VAC work, and whose own programmes also benefit from VAC work. Although not expressed in documentation, interviewees clearly differentiated between ICPs and national NGOs who also seem to be managing developmental programmes in member states. It seems that ICPs will also often fund smaller NGOs to help roll out their projects in the country. NGO and ICP mandates are thus often closely aligned. The VAC system has one main funder—the United Kingdom’s (UK’s) Department for International Development (DfID), whose main aim (according to its official website) is to end extreme poverty through job creation, empowerment of women, and humanitarian response. As also explored in Chapter Three, DfID is one of the international agencies that have increasingly applied the concept of resilience as a key aim of long-term development and humanitarian interventions.

I have yet to discuss an important set of actors: groups that are vulnerable, whom the VAC system was set up to help. Although central to the purpose of the VAC system, vulnerable groups do not seem to feature beyond food security statistics and livelihood reports. They cannot be considered an active group within the VAC, acting out of free will with access to resources or direct involvement in VAC outcomes. Their representation takes the form of analysed data in NVAC and regional VAA reports. As such, they cannot be presented as actors with agency, except in a few rare instances where interviewees expressed the active participation of communities in programme development. The VAC mainly uses focus group discussions and structured interviews to gather data. Participants are invited to participate as representatives of different wealth groups within a community. Within the HEA, wealth groups are defined as follows: “A group of households within the same community who share similar capacities to exploit the different food and income options within a particular livelihood zone” (SC-UK & FEG Consulting 2008:xiii). Data gathering methods thus represent the degree to which vulnerable groups participate in VAC activities. Some interviewees mentioned reporting findings back to communities once the reports have been finalised, but this could not be confirmed. Further empirical evidence is required to determine the participation and influence of marginalised vulnerable groups in the VAC.

6.4 Coalitions in the VAC

A number of coalitions have formed in the VAC. As explained earlier, policy coalitions consist of actors who share resources and interpretations of discourses, consequently having (more or less) similar goals, which they try and reach by applying their resources and power in the context of the rules of the policy arrangement. The goal of the VAC is to assess vulnerability in the SADC region in order to inform emergency interventions, development programmes, and policy formulation that would ultimately reduce regional vulnerability. However, vulnerability has a number of different interpretations as explored in Chapter Four: a) It is aligned purely with acute food insecurity; b) It is aligned with acute food and nutrition insecurity; c) It is aligned with both acute and chronic food (and nutrition) insecurity; d) It is aligned purely with livelihood insecurity (or poverty); and e) It is aligned with livelihood insecurity (or poverty) as far as livelihoods (or poverty) influence food (and nutrition) insecurity. Coalitions have formed around these interpretations and applied resources accordingly. The research frameworks within the VAC system seem to conveniently group these coalitions. Power and available resources determine which frameworks are applied, and once used

continue to channel resources towards very specific goals. Frameworks thus do not only indicate coalitions, but also maintain them. These frameworks have become institutions within the VAC and will be discussed from this perspective in Chapter Seven.

As a consequence of a large number of diverse agents with different mandates constituting the VAC, a number of different frameworks for assessing vulnerability emerged from the system. Initially different agencies tried to promote their frameworks as the one future standard (Int. 3 to Landman 2013), yet it seems the pursuit of a single comparative framework has ended: “No it's not an issue anymore. I don't think it is. People are very tolerant of ... other people's methodologies right now. For example... now we're having a ... climate change seminar where we want to give a display booth, where we are going to display what VACs are doing – the products and the outputs³⁸” (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). As mentioned before, the acceptance of a diverse set of approaches hinders comparability and the reduction of uncertainty across the region, yet there are arguments to support it as the most appropriate strategy to accommodate diverse contexts, if an actual reduction of vulnerability could be shown. Furthermore, the VAC requires a strong monitoring and evaluation system in order to continuously adapt strategies to changes in its context.

In this basket of approaches, a number of frameworks have persevered, but the two main frameworks are the HEA (see Figure 19 for a visual representation of the framework), and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (see Figure 20 for an overview of IPC levels) (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). Although these frameworks could be applied to complement each other, NVACs seem to support either one or the other.

The HEA was developed in the early 1990s as a collaborative effort between SC-UK and the FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System. At the time it became clear that rural poor people did not only depend on their own production to survive, but also employed a number of other strategies to get the food and income they required to sustain themselves. These strategies were mostly market-orientated. It thus became important to look beyond people's production capacities to other means people use to access food (SC-UK & FEG Consulting 2008:3). The history of the HEA thus seems to contain an element of recognition of vulnerable people's agency in mobilisation and networking.

The HEA guideline was developed for the RHVP funded by DfID and Australian Aid (AusAid). In the guideline, the HEA is defined as:

...a livelihoods-based framework for analysing the way people obtain access to the things they need to survive and prosper. It helps determine people's food and income needs and identify appropriate means of assistance, whether short-term emergency interventions or longer-term development programmes or policy changes. It is based on the principle that an understanding of how people usually make ends meet is essential for assessing how livelihoods will be affected by acute or medium-term economic or ecological change and for planning interventions that will support, rather than undermine, their existing survival strategies.

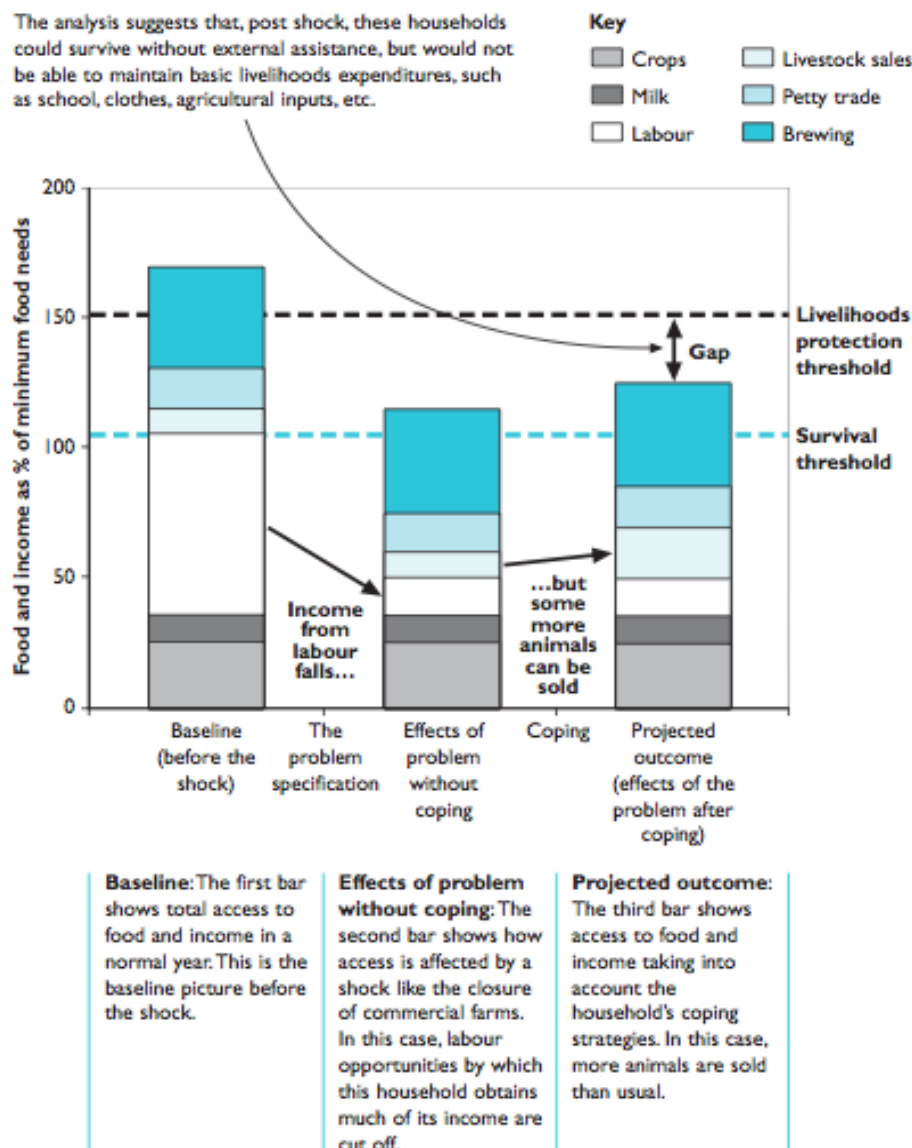
(SC-UK & FEG Consulting 2008:4-5)

The HEA thus takes a strong livelihood approach to measure how people will cope in the face of change,

³⁸ Interviewees seem to use 'methodology', 'method', and 'framework' interchangeably.

and regards food security as being central to survival. The guideline defines vulnerability as follows: “People are vulnerable if they are expected to be unable to cope with a defined hazard; for example, they are vulnerable to crop failure if such a hazard is likely to reduce their access to food or cash below a defined threshold” (SC-UK & FEG Consulting 2008:xiii). Food insecurity is used as an example of vulnerability in this definition, recognising the difference between the two. The HEA is an analytical framework, not a methodology or method. It merely describes the kind of information that needs to be collected and how it should be analysed to answer specific research questions (SC-UK & FEG Consulting 2008). Both primary and secondary data can be used.

Figure 19: A visual representation of the HEA framework



The 'y' axis represents food and income as a **percentage of minimum annual food energy needs**. In short, food and income sources have been converted into kilocalories which are then compared to 2100 kcal, which represents the internationally accepted minimum energy requirement per person per day. While simplified in this graphic for the purposes of illustration, this is an important concept in HEA because converting food and income into a common currency allows analysts to quantify and make comparisons.

Source: SC-UK & FEG Consulting (2008:7)

Figure 20: General descriptions of IPC phases

Phase		General Description
1A	Generally Food Secure	Usually adequate and stable food access with moderate to low risk of sliding into Phase 3, 4, or 5.
1B	Generally Food Secure	
2	Moderately / Borderline Food Insecure	Borderline adequate food access with recurrent high risk (due to probable hazard events and high vulnerability) of sliding into Phase 3, 4, or 5.
3	Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis	Highly stressed and critical lack of food access with high and above usual malnutrition and accelerated depletion of livelihood assets that, if continued, will slide the population into Phase 4 or 5 and / or likely result in chronic poverty.
4	Humanitarian Emergency	Severe lack of food access with excess mortality, very high and increasing malnutrition, and irreversible livelihood asset stripping
5	Famine / Humanitarian Catastrophe	Extreme social upheaval with complete lack of food access and / or other basic needs where mass starvation, death, and displacement are evident

Source: IPC Global Partners (2008)

FAO's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit developed the IPC for use in Somalia. During the food crisis in the Horn of Africa in 2011, the IPC was used as a scientific reference to declare famine for some parts of Somalia in a common voice. Today it is applied in more than 25 countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (FAO n.d.). According to the official IPC website, the IPC is: "...a standardized scale that integrates food security, nutrition and livelihood information into a clear statement about the nature and severity of food insecurity and implications for strategic response" (FAO 2014). The website also clearly states that the IPC is a framework for situation analysis that can be adapted to a variety of food security contexts. It is also a forum to reach technical consensus. The IPC cannot, however, stand alone. It is also not a methodology or method. It is a framework that builds on several methodologies and methods, organising information and adding on to existing information systems to analyse a situation. It merely highlights options for strategic response objectives (FAO 2014). The IPC is thus predominantly a framework that can be applied in emergency food securities. It has a standardised scale to classify the severity of food security situations into one of five phases, each with a coordinating colour: minimal (green), stressed (yellow), crisis (orange), emergency (red) and famine (maroon) (FAO n.d.).

Again, the HEA and IPC are frameworks and not methodologies or methods. The HEA enables the collection of new data, whilst the IPC organises existing data into a framework that can be interpreted further. The focus of the HEA is both short and long-term, taking a livelihoods approach to determine the strategies people employ to survive: "...the house economy analysis analytical framework... takes things beyond emergency assistance, but looks at the question of livelihood, the causes of food insecurity and the question of how resilience could be improved" (Int. 7 to Landman 2013). Food security takes a central position in survival. The IPC is a tool for emergency food security situations, to be used as a way to reach technical

consensus about the severity of the emergency: "...[the] IPC is also the food security analysis, whereby we are putting together different indicators, which all draw to one conclusion about the food security situation in the country...It has... classes of food security. You classify an area ...which we might classify as either having a...emergency or it's just a crisis situation or it's...or sometimes we can classify it as...famine in the worst situations" (Int. 18 to Landman 2013). Both frameworks also claim to be multi-agency in nature, with the HEA having SC-UK as its lead technical partner within the VAC system, and the IPC having FAO as its technical lead (Int. 5 to Landman 2013).

During the semi-structured interviews, consultants, RVAC members, and governments discussed the HEA more often than they did the IPC. The only group that mentioned the IPC more than the HEA were the ICPs. Even so, it does not mean that the HEA is more popular than the IPC; the HEA has merely been around longer than the IPC (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). It is interesting to note how closely the VAC mandate and the HEA definition are to one another, as both aim to inform emergency interventions, development programmes, and policy. While the HEA could have influenced the development of the VAC mandate in 2005 and still enjoys strong support from a few ICPs and NVACs, it seems to have lost its momentum within the VAC. Further investigations are required to determine the causes, but its initial cost and longer term livelihood indicators seem to have compelled VAC members and agents to find additional and alternative frameworks that can accommodate more pressing food security challenges. Most NVACs have completed HEA baseline studies, but instead of building on them by continuing with the monitoring capability of the HEA, they opt for other frameworks and merely use the HEA baseline as a targeting tool. Although WFP's Emergency Food Security Analysis (EFSA) is also used to complement the HEA in times of crisis, the IPC has become the main complementary and (in some cases) opposing framework.

As a relatively new framework, the IPC is gaining a lot of momentum within the VAC. A working group for the IPC has been established within the RVAC, supplying funding and opportunities for skills development to the VAC system. The IPC also seems to benefit from great support from the PMU (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). The IPC does not require primary data collection, but instead uses existing data and information systems, merely framing the information to determine the status of a food security emergency. This seems to be an incentive for applying the tool in contexts requiring prompt outputs. Its strong food security focus aligns with that of the VAC system, and it produces outputs that are easy to present to decision-makers. After consultation with its users, the developers of the IPC have also included a chronic assessment as a second part of the framework. This part of the tool still needs some refinement: one shortcoming is that it assumes that a country has a variety of good quality information systems that it can build on, which is not always the case.

There seem to be three coalitions forming around these two frameworks. 1) There is a group of consultants, ICPs, and NVACs that support combining the HEA and IPC, and even including other frameworks such as the EFSA from WFP, which also assesses emergency food security situations. This group leans towards a broader definition of vulnerability, taking both short- and long-term approaches to address vulnerability. Food security remains one of the key measures of vulnerability, however. 2) The second group supports only the HEA and has strong reservations about the IPC. Vulnerability is regarded as a sensitivity of livelihoods to

shocks, with food security central to survival. This group seems to be slowly recognising that the IPC could actually complement the HEA, but is not yet fully invested in the idea. 3) The third coalition appears to have given up on the HEA; it perhaps still draws on some aspects of the framework, but directs most of its capacity and resources towards the IPC. This group focuses strongly on acute food security vulnerability, but is also beginning to consider chronic food insecurity. While the boundaries between these three coalitions are blurry, there is a general shift towards the IPC. Considering the vulnerability discourse as discussed in Chapter Four, this shift makes sense. The IPC has a strong emergency food security focus, although it has also developed a more chronic assessment recently. Vulnerability will thus always be understood as vulnerability to food insecurity, but perhaps there is scope for looking at more chronic vulnerability, which would require taking into consideration additional drivers. A complete departure from the HEA will have negative implications, however. The HEA framework has already been used in much of the work to assess chronic vulnerability in looking beyond emergency situations to strategies poorer people employ in the face of change. Entry points for building resilience could thus also be identified using the HEA. A decision to depart from the HEA should not be made lightly; it requires careful consideration, which should start with exposing underlying discourses in the VAC as discussed in Chapter Five.

6.5 Power and resources in the PAA

Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004), two of the creators of the PAA, further develop the power dimension within the framework. They argue that within the PAA, access to resources is inherent to the concept of power. Actors with access to resources are able to achieve certain outputs. It is important to note that having resources does not automatically imply their application—the resources need to be applied to reach specific policy goals. Liefferink (2006) states that resources can take the form of money or information. Power can also be relational, a disposition, or a structural phenomenon of a system (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004), as explored further in this section. Arts and Van Tatenhove's definition of power is thus: "...power is the organisational and discursive capacity of agencies, either in competition with one another or jointly, to achieve outcomes in social practices, a capacity which is however co-determined by the structural power of those social institutions in which these agencies are embedded" (2004:347).

After a lengthy chronological consideration of texts on the dimensions of power, Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004) present and substantiate their own three-layered model of policy and power, which builds on the PAA and draws on Giddens's structuration theory, Clegg's three-circuit model, and Foucault's conceptualisation of power (see Table 11). The first type of power is relational, referring to agent power or power as capacity. Through relational power, agents are able to achieve outcomes through interactions (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). It is interesting to observe the similarity between relational power and the concept of emergence in complexity theory, as explored in the introduction: a system only exists and outputs only emerge because of the interactions between elements (Cilliers 1998, 2009). The system is not a combination of its singular parts, but the result of the interactions between these parts. Relational power only emerges when actors interact with each other. "Power is always constituted and exerted in social relationships" (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004:23). Actors, resources, interactions, and outcomes thus constitute this layer. This level also includes transitive power, which refers to power struggles where agents achieve policy outcomes against the will of others, and intransitive power, which refers to actors working together to achieve policy outcomes

(Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). This type of power is linked to the concept of policy innovation, which is defined as the “...problem-orientated renewal of policy making by agents in day-to-day practices” (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004:341), or simply the decision of policy makers to do things differently.

Table 11: The three layers of power and policy

Type of power	Focus	Policy concept
Relational (transitive & intransitive)	The achievements of policy agents through interactions	Policy innovation
Dispositional	The positioning of agents in arrangements, determined by rules and resources	Policy arrangement
Structural	The structuring of arrangements, mediated by orders of signification, domination and legitimisation	Political modernisation

Source: Adapted from Arts & Van Tatenhove (2004)

The second type of power that Art and Van Tatenhove (2004) present is dispositional, referring to the positions of agents within a policy arrangement, determined by rules and resources. Institutional rules define and legitimise the positions of actors, whilst access to resources determines actors’ autonomy and dependency on each other (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). Although an organisation exists as a separate entity, it cannot be detached from human action, as it is through human interactions (or relational power) that organisations emerge (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). This touches on the actor-structure continuum presented in Figure 9 in Chapter Two. Dispositional power in turn then begins to shape relational power (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). A good example of dispositional power is the way in which the PMU has come to be the most powerful actor in the VAC, as is explored later in this chapter. The PMU was instituted by the RVAA programme, and has been given the power to apply resources as it sees fit.

The third type of power is structural, which refers to how larger societal structures shape the first two levels of power exerted by individuals and organisations. Structural power could often be overlooked, as it represents a power that is unconsciously exercised. Structural power includes orders of signification, legitimisation, and dominations, which are materialised as discourses and political, legal, and economic institutions. An example of structural power is how the discourse on the first policy level, as explored in Chapter Five, has influenced and created conflicting dynamics in the discourse on the second policy level. SADC governments, as well as funders and development partners forming part of the VAC system, shape vulnerability discourse on the first level. The VAC’s dependence on resources and technical support from funders and development partners, as well as these entities’ membership in the VAC, have meant that first level discourses also shape vulnerability discourses on the second level. The influence of first level discourse on the second level was greater in the early years of the VAC. With the push for institutionalisation, embedding NVACs in national governments, funders and development partners have lost some of their power. Nevertheless, because of these governments’ dependence on financial and other kinds of support from international actors, the ICPs remain involved with VAC work. These structures have consequently shaped discourse on the second level, particularly in the early years when international food security discourse was strong. Since the development of international resilience discourse, however, power dynamics on the governing level have changed, and consequently the shift to resilience discourse has been slowed down. Another example of structural power is how the RVAA programme is situated within the agricultural information unit under food security within FANR. These structures also influence the

programme's focus and expected outputs. These discursive and institutional structures mediate how actors create meaning, consider some actions allowable and others not, and are enabled or prevented from applying resources to achieve certain outcomes. These social structures exist because of human action and thus cannot be separated from it (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). However, social structures tend to last longer than individuals or organisations (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004). Structural power is linked to the concept of political modernisation (Arts & Van Tatenhove 2004), or the government-governance continuum (see Chapter Two).

6.6 Power and resources in the VAC

Applying Liefferink's (2006) advice, the actors in the VAC and the main coalitions that exist between them have been identified in the previous sections. In Figure 21 I continue to follow his advice and map these actors into clusters on a chart according to their roles in the VAC. It is important to note that this diagram is not an exact science, but based on limited interactions with four key interviewees (see 3.4.2.v for a full description of the development of the chart). The point of this diagram was to explore relational and dispositional power in the VAC. The map was sent to a select few interviewees (see Appendix 12 for e-mail correspondence) to collect their input on the matter. Interviewees were chosen to present each of the four quadrants: the SADC FANR, RVAC and PMU (as decision-makers); the NVACs and governments³⁹ (as policy agents); the ICPs and other external consultants (as advisors); and the funders (as enablers). The relative size of various actors within these clusters is indicated by the size of each dot on the map. These sizes are not an exact science, but based on interactions with VAC members and the review of VAC documents. A larger dot would thus indicate a larger-sized organisation or groupings within the VAC; some dots are similarly sized, meaning they are similarly sized in reality too. The closer a dot is to the centre of the map, the greater its power in relation to other actors. The inner circle indicates central power, the middle circle medium power, and the outside circle indicates peripheral power.

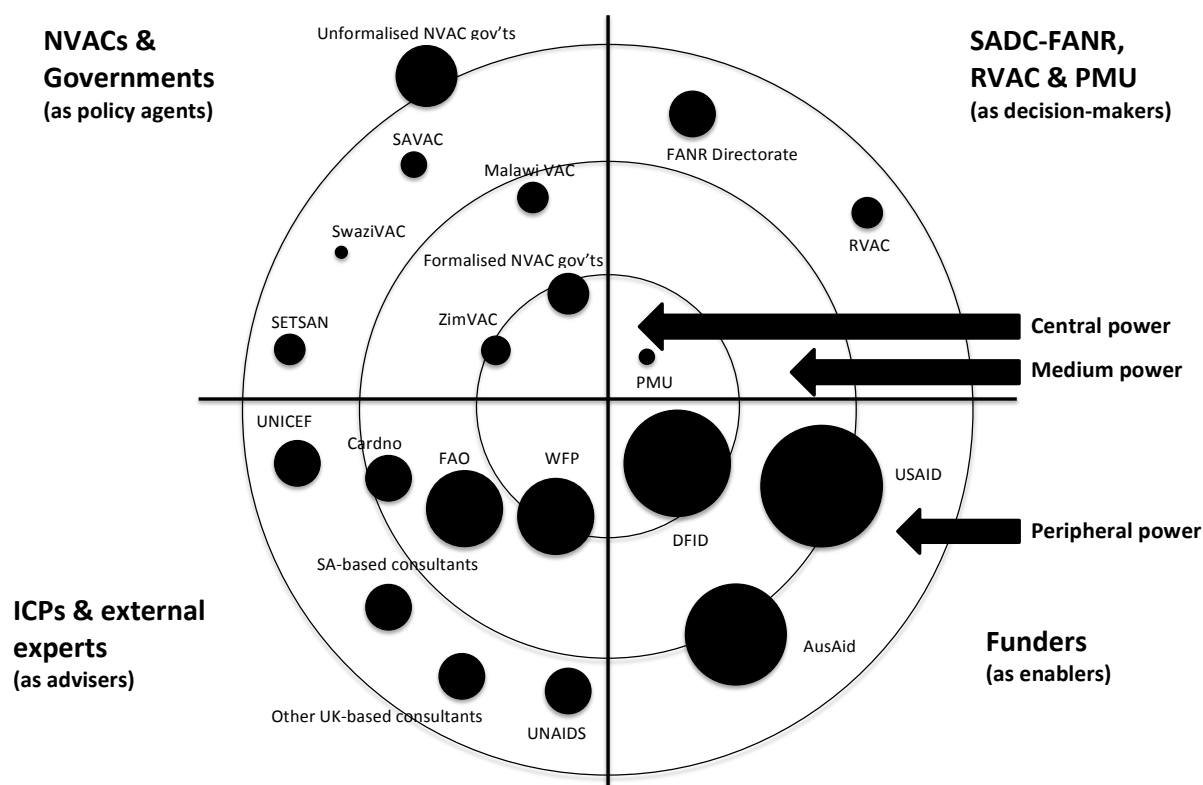
One of the most noticeable things about this power diagram is that the relative size of these dots and thus the actors does not influence their power within the VAC system. Unformalised NVACs represent a rather large actor when grouped, and yet have only peripheral power within the VAC. Smaller and individual NVACs such as the ZimVAC and MVAC have much more influence in the system. It is also clear that the main funder, DfID, the RVAA PMU, WFP, governments with formalised NVACs, and the ZimVAC have central power within the VAC system. FAO, Cardno, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), AusAid, and the MVAC have medium power. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), consultants, SETSAN, the SwaziVAC, SAVAC, governments with unformalised NVACs, the SADC FANR, and the RVAC all have peripheral power. Most replies from interviewees commented on how to restructure the diagram. These comments included:

I would actually place the Region (SADC FANR) and the ICPs together (they are kind of the same thing, being intergovernmental, with limited real political mandates, and funded by contributions or project grants). Donors are separate (they have finance but very limited technical resources – they tend to outsource all technical work – and they have clout only through their financial contributions.

(The second respondent to Landman 2013)

³⁹ As discussed earlier during the identification of actors in the VAC system, governments are separated into having formalised NVACs or not. The reason for this being that the power of governments with formalised NVACs seems greater than those of non-formalised NVACs, and similar to the power of some ICPs.

Figure 21: Map of key VAC actors and their relative positions in the policy arrangement



The second respondent's feedback was partly incorporated into the diagram. Initially funders and ICPs were grouped together in a quadrant. Funders have thus been moved into their own quadrant. ICPs were not placed with the SADC FANR, however. Instead they were placed with consultants, as most interviewees from the semi-structured interviews regarded ICPs as offering technical assistance during VAC processes.

The third respondent was happy with the diagram, but wanted to know why Cardno was further away from the centre than the other agents in that quadrant. Cardno has not been introduced as an actor yet, as it does not form part of the policy arrangement as an external consultant. For the purpose of this research, it was considered a consultant, although one respondent separated them from more ad hoc consultants. According to its official website: "Cardno is an ASX-200 professional infrastructure and environmental services company, with expertise in the development and improvement of physical and social infrastructure for communities around the world" (Cardno 2014). The RVAA programme contracted Cardno to provide technical assistance in its third phase. At the 2013 AOM, Cardno did a number of presentations, including how the VAC could implement a monitoring and evaluation system:

I regard consultants as being outsiders as compared to Cardno. I feel Cardno has more impact through their regular technical input. Consultants may offer quality service, but due to their high fees have lower engagement rate than Cardno.

(The third respondent to Landman 2013)

The third respondent's feedback was carefully considered and Cardno was then moved from having peripheral power like the other consultants, to having medium power. Two respondents commented on the power of the PMU:

I think SADC PMU should have a large dot than WFP, FAO or any other UN agencies because it's more influential within the VAC system.

(The fourth respondent to Landman 2013)

Although incorrectly interpreting the size of the PMU's dot as relating to its power, the fourth respondent confirmed that the PMU was more powerful than UN agencies within the VAC. Another respondent strongly emphasised this view:

Basically the core PMU ... hold an inordinate amount of power, and I would suggest their 'planet' is moved towards the centre of the solar system. In fact, maybe sun is a better word for their blob! Maybe things have changed now, but the consultant advisers based in Gabs [referring to Gaborone, Botswana] were at their beck and call, and adherence to any kind of plan was practically impossible because of the opaque and non-linear decision making processes that prevailed.

(The first respondent to Landman 2013)

The first respondent (to Landman 2013) also had strong opinions about DfID: "I really don't think that DfID are ensuring proper oversight of the programme - maybe due to the process being stage managed from the centre, but if it is properly evaluated, they will be in for a shock". It is important to state that this respondent only worked with the VAC system for a short contracted period, yet this was the impression the VAC system made on him. He might also have been more confident in expressing a brutally honest opinion, as he no longer had any vested interests: "...what I saw happening was not good enough - a waste of money in fact (look at the meeting in Jo'burg [referring to the 2013 AOM in Johannesburg, South Africa] where a large percentage of delegates were out shopping most of the time!)" (The first respondent to Landman 2013). He also placed strong emphasis on actually helping those most affected: "[We need to] speak out in the spirit of independence and call up sloppy and half baked programming when we see it. Life's too short to go along with a gravy train just for convenience and frankly, the people who are on the sharp end of climate change deserve better" (The first respondent to Landman 2013).

Having this visual suggestion of actors' positions within the VAC policy arrangement is useful, yet does not explain why they are organised in this way. It is important to interrogate how this arrangement came to be, its implications for policy formulation for reduced vulnerability, and perhaps most importantly, how is it being upheld? The final part of this section answers four sub-research questions:

- a) Why does the SADC FANR only have peripheral power?
- b) How did the PMU come to have central power?
- c) Why do some NVACs have more power within the VAC system than others?
- d) What are the implications of these power relations for policy formulation aiming to reduce regional vulnerability?

6.6.1 SADC's (lack of) power

Final decisions between SADC members are reached mainly on a consensus basis, and adhered to voluntarily. The SADC FANR, the regional institutional structure within which the VAC system is embedded, is obviously part of this governing arrangement. Although the SADC was originally set up to have (independent) jurisdiction over the southern African region, it never came into full effect. The SADC originally consisted of eight principal bodies, of which all but one made decisions on a consensus basis. The SADC Tribunal was provided for under Article 16 of the Declaration and Treaty that established the SADC in 1992

and was given legal power to apply SADC law (Saurombe 2012). The protocol required to set up the Tribunal was approved by the SADC Summit in 2001, and entered into force with the signing of the Agreement Amending the Treaty of the SADC in August 2001 to empower the Tribunal (Saurombe 2012).

The Tribunal was disbanded in 2012 without its rulings ever having any real implications (Hulse 2012). The findings of its first case in 2007 and 2008, *Mike Campbell (Pvt) Ltd and Others vs Republic of Zimbabwe*, was that the government of Zimbabwe may not have evicted farmer Campbell from his land, and that the Zimbabwe farm evictions per Amendment 17 of Zimbabwe's constitution amounted to de facto racial discrimination (Hulse 2012; Saurombe 2012). The court continued to find in favour of 77 other commercial Zimbabwean farmers who also brought cases against the Republic of Zimbabwe, yet the country continued to defy these rulings (Hulse 2012; Nathan 2012; Saurombe 2012). Zimbabwe eventually pulled out of the Tribunal (Weidlich 2009; Hulse 2012; Saurombe 2012), casting doubt over the court's legitimacy. The High Court of Zimbabwe commented in its defiance of the Tribunal's ruling that "the greater public good must prevail" (Dumon 2013). While this seems like an encouraging remark at first glance, it came as an independent judicial announcement from the Zimbabwean Court, as well as the Mugabe regime; a state of affairs that is opposite to the notion that individuals are free to pursue their own good, directed and driven by moral powers (Dumon 2013). Zimbabwe's reactions to the rulings of the SADC Tribunal were rooted in a regime consisting of men who have chosen the rule of power over the rule of law, and did not come from a democratic platform (Dumon 2013).

In 2010, the SADC Summit ordered a review of the role, functions, and terms of reference of the SADC Tribunal (TradeMark Southern Africa 2010), virtually suspending the regional court during this time (Sasman 2011). In 2012, the SADC Summit decided to first limit the jurisdiction of the court to handling disputes between member states, denying individuals and organisations the presentation of their cases. The SADC Summit is the policy-making arm of SADC, consisting of the heads of member states (Dumon 2013). As member states do not usually take each other to court, the role of the court became more elusive and it was finally disbanded at the end of that same year (Hulse 2012; Mongudhi 2013).

By disbanding the Tribunal in 2012 the Summit actually participated in illegal actions, as it had no power to restrict the Tribunal's jurisdiction or overrule the protocol (Saurombe 2012). The Tribunal's disbandment due to member states' discontent with its decisions cast doubt over member states' acceptance of decisions by the SADC. Even if the Tribunal is reinstated in the future, its influence and credibility have been eroded (Saurombe 2012). It was during these hearings and decisions about the future of the Tribunal that the SADC established its authority, or lack thereof, in southern Africa. The SADC Tribunal was the "...region's only supra-national judicial body capable of making enforceable rulings on human rights violations" (Dumon 2013). Today, the SADC can make recommendations about key issues in the region, yet cannot force its members to comply. The SADC has no sanctions in place for non-compliance, and thus depends on voluntary compliance by member states.

Dr Laurie Nathan is the Director of the Centre of Mediation at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. In his recently published book, *Community of Insecurity: SADC's Struggle for Peace and Security in Southern*

Africa (2012), he discusses three major problems that have prevented the SADC from establishing a viable security regime that can effectively engage in regional peace making. Although related to a different area, his arguments are valid in the VAC's case. He argues that there is an absence of common values between member states, which has inhibited the ability of these countries to develop common policies. The second problem is the reluctance of SADC members to surrender a degree of sovereignty to a regional regime with binding principles and rules. He explains that this is due to their already-weak hold on sovereignty and their differences in approaches to the strategies and orientation of the SADC. This was clearly demonstrated during the disbandment of the SADC Tribunal and again in August 2014, when South Africa and Namibia refused to sign the Protocol on Trade in Services at the close of the SADC summit in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, despite regional heads applying pressure during deliberations (Gagare & Mushava 2014). Finally, Nathan (2012) argues that the economic and administrative weaknesses of member states have undermined the effectiveness of forums and programmes established by the SADC. Essentially, these events have left the SADC without the power to enforce any of its programmes, and so the VAC has always operated on a voluntary basis. The push for formalising NVACs within national governments may also be driven by this lack of regional authority. However, giving each member state the final say over what vulnerability information is released, based on a variety of methods applied by different NVACs, also contributes to uncertainty and ambiguity.

6.6.2 The RVAA programme and its PMU

The PMU was established 14 months after the approval of the RVAA programme to provide technical and financial support to existing and new NVACs within the scope of the programme. The overarching programme goals were three-fold: through the building up and strengthening of national and regional VAA systems a) enhance national policy formulation, development programmes, and emergency interventions; b) strengthen the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP); and c) support ICPs to make informed decisions in their allocation of resources for short- and long-term regional interventions. These goals are clearly grounded in the mandate. Interviewees also expressed that the RVAA programme was supposed to address the lack of policy formulation from vulnerability information up to that point: "...when this programme started, the drive was for it to actually capacitate the vulnerability members, the countries, so that they could use this VAA information into the policy formulation right. We were wondering why is it that we are generating the information year in and year out [and yet] we have vulnerable people coming up. What is being done? So we realised there was a gap...ja in the policy formulation. The information was being used for emergency purposes, which was for a short term, but without the focus of looking at, at long term" (Int. 6 to Landman) and "...the five year programme was, was meant to strengthen that [referring to the VAC as an information platform] and take it a step further to influence policy formulation" (Int. 6 to Landman 2013). Interviewees also referred to a number of more specific RVAA programme focuses:

- Climate change: "...there's a RVAA programme supported by DfID, which is actually supporting NVACs for now, so within the programme itself, it's funded within the bigger platform of ... programmes within DfID, so it's kind of also supposed to support or build capacities of the NVACs to respond to climate change issues" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013);
- Training and peer-to-peer learning: "...the PMU programme is actually promoting that

interchange of expertise and even there to go and do field visits" (Int. 6 to Landman 2013);

- Formalising NVACs, and providing funding and technical support: "So one of the main reasons why you may have found there's ... emphasis on institutionalisation and helping the NVACs to sort ... you know, get their house together and so on and so forth. Even helping them in terms of funding as well to do some of the assessment work that they need to do" (Int. 8 to Landman 2013);
- Prescribing methods: "...the SADC mandate, which as a department we need to fulfil, which is also about reporting about the vulnerability status for the south African community and in that you had to follow a certain methodology as prescribed or recommended by SADC by the SADC RVAA programme" (Int. 9 to Landman 2013).

There is a clear understanding that the purpose of the RVAA programme was and still is to formalise NVACs within their respective governments and build long-term capacity for the VAC and the SADC FANR to operate without the support of the RVAA programme: "One, currently the first one is to build capacity and institutionalise the VACs in their countries but also helping the SADC-FANR to be able to manage the easy role in terms of getting regional level information on vulnerability in the region, because once this project is not there, that role of consolidating into a regional report what is the state of vulnerability in the SADC region, it will remain with SADC and it will remain under FANR" (Int. 8 to Landman 2013), "The idea is that by that 2016, SADC-FANR should be in a position to actually run with this thing ...internally, without the assistance of a project, which is what they're trying also to do in the countries – to say countries must internalise all of this ... set aside an integrate budget and you know, based on the work plans that the VACs are coming up with each year" (Int. 8 to Landman 2013), "And let's not forget that this is a project...[PMU staff member names] are working on a project of SADC. And one of the main objectives is by the end of that project national VAC should be institutionalised in all countries. So that's why they want to focus on ensuring that they help countries to attain this institutionalisation and that would actually sort of phase them out. Build capacity. Institutionalise. So once you do that there's no more need for a project at SADC to do that because then all that capacity's in the countries and they can run this whole thing by themselves. They don't really need to [be] assisted through a project" (Int. 8 to Landman 2013). The PMU approached all three goals with a strong push for formalising NVACs in national government structures. The term used by the VAC system for this process is 'institutionalisation'. It was assumed that process would build the necessary capacity within the VAC and the SADC FANR to carry the mandate of the system forward.

As also expressed by the first respondent to the power diagram, the PMU approach to this process is "opaque and non-linear". There is no documented process of how a country should approach the VAC system if it wishes to establish and formalise an NVAC: "I remember asking a question once if every NVAC, if there was a standard terms of reference for every NVAC. And okay, I think the answer was no... I think they were drafting one. Last year at this organisational meeting, they had sent out a draft terms of reference for everyone to comment" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). The only set procedures seem to be the presentation of work plans at the annual AOM, yet after these presentations the process is blurry. During the 2013 AOM, one NVAC expressed frustration with the fact that it was presenting the same financial requirements for the third year in a row and the PMU, with the power of allocating technical support and financial resources, had

not yet responded to it in any way. The PMU then stunned the NVAC by responding that the NVAC was supposed to submit a proposal. It may be that these processes exist but are not communicated.

The initial RVAA programme would last five years, but has been renewed twice and will currently run until 2016. In total the project has run for 11 years, and some interviewees expressed the belief that it will be renewed again: "...the five year programme, it started as a VAC programme but it has gone beyond... it would be a programme now without a time limit and this is where we are" (Int. 6 to Landman 2013) and "Maybe it will be extended, we don't know, but right now it's up to 2016" (Int. 8 to Landman 2013). Considering the purpose of the programme, the only reason for renewing the programme would be that it has not yet met its goals. This then begs the question: Is this programme the most effective way to formalise the VAC system, if after 11 years it has failed to establish financial independence and has only had limited success in influencing national policy formulation? Perhaps one needs to take another step back and ask: Is formalising the NVACs within national governments the best way to ensure the future sustainability of the system?

Since its launch seven years ago, the PMU has become an authoritative institution within the VAC system. It has the power to allocate resources and technical assistance to countries as it deems appropriate. The RVAC has consequently taken a less prominent advisory role, demonstrated in its inability to take decisions without PMU direction, as well as its lack of disposable resources. One RVAC member explained it as follows: "Right to look at what are the issues, provide technical guidance and, ... prioritise the activities, strategise together with, with the PMU so we are playing an advisory role to the PMU. The PMU is the one that is running the programme. But we play an advisory role to the, to the PMU" (Int. 6 to Landman 2013). Interviewees even referred to the PMU and SADC structures or the RVAC as synonymous: "I think the best people to answer those questions are the SADC guys, I think definitely you will meet [the PMU Project Coordinator]" (Int. 6 to Landman 2013), and "... every regional IPC technical working group meeting, you have [PMU staff members], because IPC is implemented through the RVAC, in the region. So we cannot directly approach the national VACs. We have to go through the RVAC. We have to go through [Project Coordinator of the PMU]" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). This has shifted the intended locus of power away from the RVAC to a unit that is directly accountable to donors rather than to SADC structures. Being accountable to donors is not in itself a negative thing, but considering the purpose of the VAC and what it is trying to accomplish within the region, a regional overseer would be more appropriate. The PMU has driven the agenda of institutionalisation, assuming that this would deliver the VAC mandate, yet by 2014 only two active policies had been put in place, and in one the influence of VAA is unclear. Furthermore, the one policy that has unambiguously been influenced by VAC work focuses only on food and nutrition security, and has only been actively implemented from the beginning of 2013. No studies have been conducted to assess the actual impact of this policy on regional vulnerability. It is vital that VAC members be made aware of the inordinate amount of power held by the PMU, and that opportunities are created for critical discussions about how to best move forward. Judging from the PMU's response to my presentation at the 2013 AOM, it would be necessary to bring in an objective facilitator to make sure that those overpowered by the PMU are also given the opportunity to voice their concerns.

6.6.3 Differing degrees of power between NVAC

This section contains findings with regards to the power held by the three institutionalised NVACs I interviewed (the ZimVAC, MVAC, and SETSAN). I choose to focus on the institutionalised NVACs, because although they have varying degrees of power within the VAC, these NVACs have been around the longest and are thus more established within the VAC. Interviewees were asked which NVAC they considered most successful and why. With a few exceptions, the ZimVAC was identified as the champion: "...it's really one of the best examples I can give right now, where it's really embedded within and driving the government agenda. It's pushing the policy. It's right within the policy – it's inseparable. If you look at the structure the way they've really put it, it's there, the policy is there, the various players are there, the [Zim]VAC is central in informing [policy]" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). Interviewees attributed the ZimVAC's success to its successful formalisation within the FNC under the presidency and its access to sufficient funding: "Zimbabwe VAC? Where I consider it successful? I think they ...are set up, ... they are able to mobilise adequate resources and carry out the assessments, some of their assessments have been very thorough" (Int. 16 to Landman 2013) and "...Zimbabwe, they have improved because the improvement comes in that I think they have a number of ... maybe they have funding, maybe their funding is stable, ...their analysis [is] a bit comprehensive" (Int. 20 to Landman 2013).

The willingness of the ZimVAC to pilot new frameworks or assessments might have given it an advantage over the other NVACs, as it has gained significant capacity for vulnerability analysis and has thus become the ideal NVAC through which to roll out future assessments: "It was much easier working with Zimbabwe, because maybe in this case it was different. They had piloted the IPC before. So it had... a lot of experiences with the IPC and they were how can I say? Zimbabwe is very competitive in the sense that they want to be the top country in the SADC. So whatever proposals we have got and whether it's for DRR, whether it's for conservation agriculture or IPC, they would generally really get their teeth into it...they're always the best, because it was very rigorous, it was very technically sound ... they were much a more technically advanced than the other VACs" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013).

Nevertheless, as the first respondent to the power chart stated: "...if ZimVAC are perceived to be the best and most powerful, then the rest of the VACs must be truly dire" (to Landman 2013). His sentiments were not linked to the quality or quantity of actual activities within the ZimVAC, but its concentrated focus on emergency food insecurity and failure to address broader vulnerability issues through informing longer-term policies and programmes: "ZimVAC is used to direct humanitarian programming, but it is a long way from serving the role demanded by DfID under the current round of funding; ...ZimVAC is simply not delivering the information necessary to inform the emerging resilience agenda" (The first respondent to Landman 2013). The strong food security focus might stem from the Zimbabwean government's role within the SADC before it was restructured, as discussed in Chapter Four: "At that time SADC was disaggregated. Each country was given a responsibility to co-ordinate. Food security was co-ordinated in Zimbabwe" (Int.8 to Landman 2013). It may also be that the strong relationship the ZimVAC has with WFP has played a significant role: "...the ZimVAC and WFP seem to work so close and well together. WFP uses a lot of ZimVAC information to apply for funding, as well as target beneficiaries for their projects" (Int. 27 to Landman 2013). Referring back to the power diagram, it is also important to note that WFP holds the most power of all the ICPs in the VAC.

Another interviewee commented on this: "...you know Zim[babwe] is very much reliant also on donors for their projects. I mean-, I think World Food Programme has a huge project there... huge programmes and [in] Malawi also" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). WFP has a very clear food-related mandate, but has also tended to focus more on food aid programmes. As the first respondent to the power diagram exercise also stated, this emergency food security focus has kept ZimVAC from informing the emerging resilience agenda of the VAC's main funder, DfID.

Whatever is said about the ZimVAC, there is no doubt that it holds an immense amount of power within the VAC system. The Zimbabwean government specifically has gained a lot of power within the ZimVAC, excluding other actors from the NVAC processes:

I know that now in Zimbabwe for instance, the NGOs have been excluded from the current vulnerability analysis this year. So this is definitely not a good move from our point of view...there might be specific reasons and obviously the government is in charge of their own business, but from the technical point of view we definitely encourage broader consultation...we need to bring in all these elements from ... long-term global, environmental change and implications and the impacts [of] urbanisation and a number of specific hazards and threats to food security in the region. So unless we are able to bring all these elements to the table, we will still deal with a number of ...a very narrow set of issues and ... related policy.

(Int. 5 to Landman 2013)

The ZimVAC's attitude also reflects the Zimbabwean government's attitude within the larger SADC structures, as was evident during the disbandment of the SADC Tribunal. With central power as indicated in the power diagram, and being promoted as the poster child of VAC activities, the ZimVAC will greatly influence other up and coming NVACs, strengthening the overall VAC focus on food security. As a frontrunner, the ZimVAC is thus also the ideal entry point for inspiring change in the VAC.

The few interviewees who did not identify the ZimVAC as the most successful NVAC pointed instead to the MVAC. As one of the first established NVACs, the MVAC has been part of the VAC system's entire history. According to interviewees, it was considered the most powerful NVAC in the earlier years. As a consequence some of its members were recruited to join SADC structures, as well as ICPs: "Malawi has been successful at a point, very successful with that. To an extent that we exported a lot of expertise, I was one of them... You can imagine what the team was like back that. We were very strong, but we actually saw our own downfall because of our... everyone thinking that we were, you know, had a lot of expertise ...then we had all of a sudden this attrition and now we are kind of building" (Int. 17 to Landman 2013). It lost capacity and knowledge, and was soon overtaken by the ZimVAC. The MVAC also seems to be struggling to keep up with changes in the VAC system: "...whereas ZimVAC is so dynamic and proactive and the Malawi VAC is kind of the opposite because they are kind of sedentary and I think nobody really knows-, they-, it's with the power issue. They're afraid to overstep the power of maybe the chair but the chair himself is not a very strong leader" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). It may also have lost admiration after misrepresenting its Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) findings to accumulate greater international funding: "In fact the government was very criticised, they were criticised at the RVAC dissemination, because they had... a small group of the NVAC actually got together and completed the projection and they presented it at the RVAC in 2012 and they had received a lot of criticism to say that you have no base to declare a phase four ... and that they had actually changed their results. They went back and they changed it... I think they lost

credibility because the RVAC had realised" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013).

When asking RVAC members and consultants which NVACs I should approach for the semi-structured interviews, almost all mentioned SETSAN. It was also once an esteemed NVAC, yet the interviewees who suggested I look into SETSAN did so telling me to establish why it has lost some of its regard: "...and then we have Mozambique. It was strong, now it's weak" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). One interviewee, who used to be part of the SETSAN team, but now worked for an ICP, suggested I speak to SETSAN, as it was the most advanced NVAC when it came to disaster management. Unfortunately, interviewing members from SETSAN proved incredibly challenging. What could only be blamed on a language barrier (all SETSAN members are first language Portuguese speakers) resulted in me arriving in Maputo for interviews and finding the entire team in the field gathering data. I only managed to speak to three members, of whom only one offered insight into SETSAN processes. Based on this one interview, it would seem that the SETSAN is still going strong. At the time of the interview it was in the process of gaining the required institutional authority to coordinate, oversee, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of other department's projects informed by SETSAN work. It may simply be that it had broken away from the larger VAC structure. Further research is required to establish the details of the situation, however.

6.6.4 Power within the formalisation process of NVACs

After presenting my initial findings at the SADC VAC AOM in 2013, one of the key issues that emerged from the audience was that formalising NVACs was proving challenging because there was a lack of understanding of where best to position the NVAC within local governments. My presentation was a critical consideration of institutionalisation, which at the time I found was mainly justified by the need to gain political clout within member states. It was assumed that with political support would come greater budget allocations and influence in policy formulation, which up to 2013 had not been proven to be the case. Even institutionalised NVACs were still dependent on external international funding, and VAC outputs had only informed two active policies. Nevertheless, my presentation was met with a lot of resistance, especially from some in central power on the power diagram, including the PMU. Those who participated in the discussion urged me to rather focus on how to improve the institutionalisation process. Although at the time I did not agree that uncritically formalising NVACs within the respective member state governments was the best way forward, I nevertheless accepted the feedback. It was essential to consider the placement of NVACs within governments as part of the structural power discussion within the VAC. At the time I was wrapping up my data collection, and a full consideration of the AOM feedback would have required a whole new study for which I did not have the time or the resources. Instead I returned to the data I had already collected to look for patterns with regards to the influence of government placement on the institutionalisation process.

From discussions with interviewees, it became clear that some NVACs had been positioned within early warning units, whilst others were situated in agricultural departments and still others in national planning and development departments. Delegates seemed to agree that it was vital to position NVACs in such a way as to demand the attention of politicians with authority, but had also begun to realise that the actual position of the NVAC within government also influenced its outputs. If positioned within an early warning unit, the focus would remain on addressing emergency situations. Similarly NVACs within agriculture would lead to a focus

on food and nutrition vulnerability, and in some countries only on production. Interviewees expressed that departments concerned with national planning and development were a strategic placement. Something that was also reflected in interviews was that situating an NVAC within a line ministry or implementing ministry would provide the NVAC with greater executing power. These are the limited patterns I could recognise in the data; additional studies are required for deeper insights.

Another issue highlighted by interviewees is the politicisation of vulnerability information and its link to institutionalised NVACs: “I think it’s a good thing that we started being embedded within government but I’m not sure in the, in the long run. It’s ok when things are working well... in this country it’s usually when, when things are really bad and it points to probably, mismanagement ... when government decides for example ...to really make decisions based on evidence [it is fine], but then it becomes a problem when there’s that political influence” (Int. 3 to Landman 2013), “...it was always a very tricky situation because the reports that were coming out of the country about the drought and the ... diseases and ... natural resource problems. These would... they would try as much as possible to downplay it and then one will have to be very dynamic in terms of making the information surface in a very non-threatening manner” (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). “But those who don’t even like agree with the findings, they’re not technical people, they are politicians” (Int.24 to Landman 2013). It is a very delicate balance for NVACs to produce objective vulnerability assessments. Reasons for the politicisation of information are that governments want to inflate statistics to gain greater support from external funders, or that they want to reduce the real numbers in order to appear competent during election years. Another reason was that governments use the information to target voters, as people who are more vulnerable would vote for candidates who promise them support, whereas those who are not would vote for candidates for other reasons.

Politicised vulnerability information completely misses the point and should be discouraged within the VAC. The VAC has identified two ways to successfully address this issue. The first is by presenting findings only after clearly explaining research frameworks to improve transparency and the credibility of information. Vague research processes lend themselves to manipulation. The second is to frame findings in a non-threatening manner in an attempt to get governments to address the issue, rather than to focus on blame shifting or trying to change findings so that they may appear in a more desirable light.

6.6.5 Resources within the VAC

Although a thorough analysis of resource flows within the VAC was not possible within the scope of this research, an analysis during the document review revealed that efforts towards advocacy of VAC work and translating research into user-friendly formats for policy makers are generally not supported within the VAC. The report on the 2009 AOM included presentations of NVAC work plans for 2010. Of the 21 activities outlined in the work plans of NVACs, only one related to policy making (Activity 10: VAC Processes Sensitisation Meetings to High Level Officials, Mass Media) and only three of the 11 members states planned for it (Botswana, Malawi and Namibia) with a budget of US\$ 59 000 out of the total US\$ 5.83 million⁴⁰ RVAA programme budget (one per cent of the budget).

⁴⁰ This total was not indicated, but calculated by adding up various indicated country totals.

In the 2010 AOM report only 1 of the 18 outlined activities in the work plans for 2011 related to policy making (Activity 9: Advocacy: VAC Processes Sensitisation). Only 3 of the then 15 member states planned for it (Mozambique, Malawi and Namibia) with a budget of US\$ 33 600 out of the total US\$ 9.39 million RVAA programme budget (0.36 per cent of the budget). There was thus a clear decreased proportional allocation to advocacy in 2010. Although not a thorough analysis of resource allocations, these two AOM reports at least reflect what was spent on advocacy of VAA in policy processes in 2010 and 2011. With access to all AOM reports, it would be possible to review advocacy allocations for every year since the inception of the VAC.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter formally introduced the key actors and coalitions within the VAC system, before considering their power and the implications of power relations for policy formulation aiming to reduce regional vulnerability. The concepts of actors and coalitions were theoretically placed and developed within the PAA. Power and resources were also discussed. Three types of power were introduced: relational, dispositional, and structural power. A power diagram of the VAC was offered to visually represent not only the actors and their roles within the VAC system, but also their relative sizes and power.

The power diagram inspired four questions relating to the SADC FANR's peripheral power, the PMU's central power, differing power amongst NVACs, and the implications of these power dynamics for the development of policies aiming to reduce regional vulnerability. The SADC lost its enforcing power with the disbandment of its Tribunal and has since depended on voluntary participation in its programmes. The VAC has accordingly been placed within the SADC FANR, inheriting this lack of overseeing power. From within the VAC the PMU has taken a central power position, applying resources and technical assistance to NVACs as it deems appropriate within its overarching aim to formalise NVACs within respective member states. It was argued that the PMU's power is maintained by its failure to complete the RVAA programme, as well as its link to the major VAC funder.

A number of NVACs have been formalised, yet three in particular were considered. Peers within the VAC system consider the ZimVAC the most successful NVAC. Its success is a credit to its access to funding, which comes from the PMU, and the capacity it has built up for various assessments as a result of its eagerness to incorporate new frameworks and methodologies. The ZimVAC's strong emergency food security focus has prevented it from informing the emerging resilience agenda of the VAC's main funder, DfID. Its most recent food and nutrition security policy, often stated as the epitome of VAC information informing policy formation, is a clear institutionalised example of how the resilience agenda is not accommodated. Its recent exclusion of NGOs in assessment processes hint toward the Zimbabwean government gaining authoritarian power within the ZimVAC. Although the MVAC used to be considered the most successful NVAC, it has lost power. Interviewees explained that its early success led to a loss of capacity to regional structures, and that the MVAC lost credibility when it misrepresented a security situation to attract more international funding. Finally, SETSAN appears to be going strong, and a sudden perceived weakening could be explained by its lack of participation in regional processes.

Although not thoroughly considered, the data indicates that the placement of NVACs within governments plays a significant role in the outcomes of the institutionalisation process. It determines not only the power of an NVAC, but also the focus. It is clear that power arrangements within the VAC system can result in politicised vulnerability information for the purposes of raising funds or votes, instead of being applied in policy formulation to reduce regional vulnerability. Power has also put in place the frameworks that interpret and maintain vulnerability as food insecurity. Slow and insufficient shifts towards a broader definition of vulnerability, including its chronic aspects, leaves vulnerable groups at the sharp end of the vulnerability cycle without the means to empower themselves. It would be strategic to use those in central power as key entry points for future change in the VAC system. Less than one per cent of the overall VAC budget from 2009 to 2010 was allocated to the advocacy of using VAA in policy processes, and the amount allocated decreased from one year to the next.

Chapter Seven: Institutions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns the final dimension of the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA), namely institutions or rules of the game. These institutions may have manifested from discourses or repeated behaviours, and guide the behaviour of actors within the policy arrangement to apply their power and resources in addressing policy issues. A brief theoretical exploration reveals a common set of assumptions about institutions, shared by different fields of study. This theoretical discussion grounds the empirical investigation constituting the rest of the chapter. It is argued that the uncovering of rules within the research and policy processes would be most useful for answering the overarching research question, *What are the blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policy processes that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?* Although the rules guiding the research and policy processes are discussed in separate sections in this chapter, it is important to understand that the two processes overlap and that for more effective transferral of research to policy, these processes should overlap. A number of rules that have emerged in each process, as well as rules relevant to both processes, are explored in detail. This chapter draws on already-presented findings from the discourse, actors, and coalitions, together with power and resources dimensions, and the document analysis and interviews.

7.2 Institutions in the PAA

This chapter investigates the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) policy arrangement by focusing on its rules or institutions. Although used differently in different fields of study, institutional approaches have a common set of assumptions:

- (1) institutions are governance structures, embodying rules for social conduct, (2) groups and organizations conforming to these rules are accorded legitimacy, a condition contributing to their survival, (3) institutions are characterized by inertia, a tendency to resist change, and (4) history matters, in the sense that past institutional structures constrain and channel new arrangements.

(Scott 2004:408)

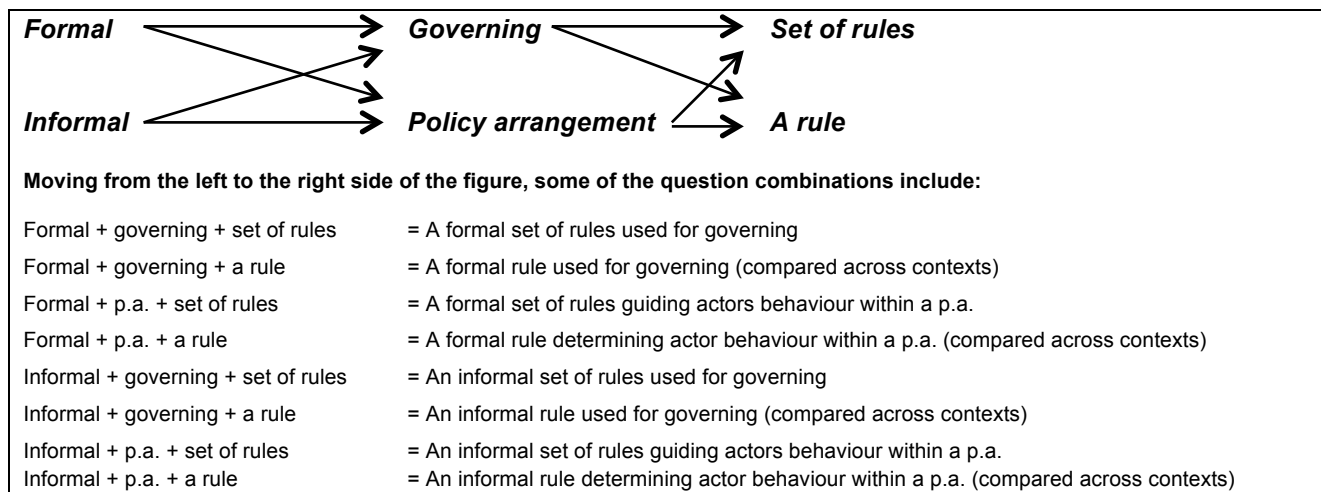
According to Liefferink (2006), rules are the formal procedures actors in the arrangement have agreed upon. Rules also include the informal routines actors have adopted within the arrangement (Liefferink 2006). They can be seen as the constraints or authoritative guidelines that shape behaviour (Scott 2004). It is also important to consider how these schemas have come into existence, how they disperse, what role they play in supplying stability and meaning to social behaviour, and how they eventually deteriorate and collapse (Scott 2004). Obviously the remains of collapsed rules will shape successor institutions and it is imperative to remain aware of such influence (Scott 2004).

It is impossible to study these institutions in isolation, and so they need to be considered against the backdrop of the other PAA dimensions (Liefferink 2006). Clearly rules are intricately linked to the PAA's actor dimension; rules connected to power create regulatory power; rules are also influenced by ideas about governing, or the discourse dimension of the PAA; and, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, rules can also emerge from the physical context in which the policy arrangement is embedded. Drawing on complexity theory and the interrelatedness of the dimensions of the PAA, these constraints would provide a common ground for the negotiation and performance of power and influence in relationships between individuals and

groups (Liefferink 2006), shaping actor interactions and the emergences from the arrangement.

Once again, entering the PAA tetrahedron from the institutions dimension could be applicable to study policy arrangements on two levels. The first would be to look into the rules structuring governing practices, and the second to look at rules structuring the behaviour of actors in the policy arrangement (Liefferink 2006). Approaching the policy arrangement from the institutions dimension could accommodate investigations into a specific rule on either level in different contexts, such as electoral systems (a contextual variable), or determining the implications of introducing a new rule in a policy arrangement (Liefferink 2006). A few possibilities of research questions that could be addressed by entering the policy arrangement from the institutions dimension are illustrated in Figure 22, but the list is clearly not complete. There can be other types, e.g. combining the listed types and considering both formal and informal rules, or investigating issues relevant on both governing and policy arrangement levels.

Figure 22: Some question combinations that could be addressed from the PAA institutions dimension



7.3 Institutions in the VAC

Based on the overarching research question of this thesis, it is necessary to consider institutional rules in at least two processes. The first is the research process to create the vulnerability information—the vulnerability assessments and analyses—and the second is the policy process. It is also imperative to recognise that the research process relates more to the day-to-day behaviour of VAC actors, whilst the policy process is a governing process. These processes obviously overlap and the boundaries between them are blurry, as the VAC ultimately aspires to be a knowledge and policy arrangement. For the sake of transferring knowledge to policy processes, it is essential that these boundaries are not definite.

As conceptualised in the first chapter, the policy process is regarded as a socio-economic feedback loop within the governing subsystem of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Socio-ecological System (SES). By implementing policies, changes can be made to the SADC-SES to reduce people's vulnerability. The VAC, operating as part of the governing subsystem, is an information unit that collects and analyses vulnerability information for use by national governments and other governing bodies within the subsystem. Governing bodies choose to use or discard the information when planning interventions. These governing bodies also form part of the VAC. In the VAC policy arrangement, interviewees have identified

government members as the owners of policy and thus bearing the responsibility for writing or at least coordinating the writing of policies that could potentially reduce regional vulnerability.

The next sections divide rules shaping actors' behaviour during research and policy processes, including both formal and informal rules on the governance level and within the policy arrangement of the VAC. Although the VAC consists of a number of National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs), I consider the VAC as one policy and knowledge arrangement and thus do not compare rules between NVACs. Drawing on complexity theory, it is also important to note that the institutional rules shaping VAC actors' behaviour are only valid within the boundaries of the model I've created of the VAC. Throughout this chapter I will continuously be considering Scott's (2004) assumptions about institutions by asking the following questions: How has this rule come into existence? Has it been influenced by the remnants of preceding institutional schemas? What meaning or stability does it give to the VAC policy arrangement? How has it influenced or dispersed throughout the rest of the arrangement? Is it deteriorating or being reinforced?

I focus on the institutional rules that have most prominently influenced policy outputs and outcomes, as mentioned by participants in interviews. Outputs and outcomes differ: outputs being actual concrete products delivered, such as a policy or programme, and outcomes referring to the difference or change created as a result of an output, for example the reduction of vulnerability. Starting with the research process, I first consider the influence of the VAC vulnerability discourse from Chapter Five on the research process. This discourse has been institutionalised through specific frameworks, the Household Economy Approach (HEA) and the IPC, that are now the formal rules shaping the VAC research processes. The VAC interpretation of vulnerability has also been translated into an informal rule concerning the minimum set of indicators each NVAC is expected to measure on an annual basis. A lack of capacity and resources exposes these indicators as what the VAC most strongly relates to Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA). The discourse on the VAC's function (Chapter Five) has also resulted in a number of institutions. Most interviewees understand the VAC's function to be different from its documented mandate. The documented mandate should arguably have led to rules shaping VAC research and policy processes yet it has not. I explore the rules that have replaced the mandate and how consequently the VAC's responsibilities have ended with dissemination, overlooking efforts towards the advocacy on the usage of vulnerability information in policy processes.

With regards to policy processes, I discuss how existing policies have formally guided VAC activities; thus a consideration of how existing contextual governing tools have shaped VAC outputs. These tools are generic and not specific to the VAC policy arrangement, and yet have to some degree determined VAC operations. This relates back to Chapter Four and the links between the VAC context and policy arrangement, as will be reiterated. The formal policies inspired by VAC outputs are also unpacked, as well as non-policy uses of VAA. Finally, under the policy process umbrella, I consider the Regional Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) programme and the assumptions that have resulted in informal rules determining the formalisation of NVACs within their respective governments. The formalisation process and its informal rules have significant implications for policy processes.

There are also a few rules relevant to both the research and policy processes. The first concerns the informality or unstructured nature of the training of VAC members, and the long-winded and yet unaccomplished process to establish the regional Centre of Excellence (CoE). One of the consequences of this has been a consultancy culture in the VAC, where work has often been outsourced due to a lack of capacity amongst VAC members. The consequence is a dependency on consultants that keep the overall VAC incapacitated. Another rule applicable to the research and policy processes is how the self-regulating multi-agency nature of the policy arrangement has led to a number of self-regulating processes within the VAC. This rule also links back to assumptions driving the RVAA programme. Although the next two sections divide institutions between the research process and policy processes, the processes should not be considered as separate if the aim is to transfer knowledge to policy. However, this organisation of the text is merely convenient, as the VAC has mostly kept these two processes separate.

7.3.1 Research institutions

As discussed extensively in Chapter Four and Five, the general understanding of vulnerability within the VAC relates strongly to food security, although developing ideas around nutrition and livelihoods as they relate to food security have also contributed to this understanding. Implicitly the VAC has been assessing vulnerability to food insecurity, and not merely food security/insecurity. Rooted in the southern African region's history of severe food security emergencies, and given the network of actors with resources at the time, which included influential international partners that related vulnerability to food security, there was never a debate about whether to broaden vulnerability assessments beyond food security. Food insecurity was a dominant international discourse during the late 1990s/early 2000s and an immediate actual concern in the SADC region, and so was translated into local discourses, motivating the VAC to move forward with food security assessments. The framing of food security from a vulnerability perspective was thus never extensively debated during the inception years of the VAC.

Although discourses around vulnerability and food security have moved on globally (see Chapter Five), at the VAC level it hasn't yet moved accordingly. The VAC vulnerability discourse has instead continued to revolve around emergency food security, which has been institutionalised in the frameworks applied in vulnerability assessments and analyses in the region (see Chapters Four, Five, and Six). These frameworks, of which the HEA and IPC are the most popular, have become the rules according to which assessments are completed. As also discussed in Chapter Six, the HEA takes both a short- and long-term approach to livelihoods vulnerability to determine what strategies people employ to survive. Food security, however, still takes a central position in survival. The IPC is a tool for emergency food security situations, to be used as a way to reach technical consensus about the severity of the emergency. It has recently been reviewed to also assess chronic vulnerability to food insecurity. Both these frameworks are multi-agency in nature as their applications depend on a variety of actors active in the fields of humanitarian response and development work. Both frameworks also preserve the food security vulnerability focus of the VAC.

Except for the interpretation of vulnerability, the VAC also showed very specific ideas about the function and purpose of the committee. As discussed in Chapter Five, most respondents said that the purpose of the VAC was to produce analysed vulnerability information to inform interventions, mostly emergency in nature. Very

few respondents said that it was to inform both emergency and longer-term policy interventions. Everyone agreed that the VAC was not an implementation body and that it was the responsibility of government and development partners to use the information in their interventions, which signifies a unilateral interaction between the VAC and implementing partners.

This understanding of the VAC has resulted in limited efforts towards advocacy for the use of vulnerability information in policy making. Even concerted dissemination efforts have been tenuous, which may be explained by the urgency that is called for in emergency situations. Users of vulnerability information in emergencies would ask or even demand the information, which makes a dissemination strategy superfluous: "...the assessment that the VACs conduct, those findings will be the very key to the CERF⁴¹ ...the CERF is ... generally only for emergencies" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). The reason why this is discussed as an institution is because most VAC members did not see this as a problem. Producing timely vulnerability information for use by others was seen as sufficient: "...as I said, our mandate is to provide information and once we provide this information, we are not held accountable ... whether people are using that information" (Int. 21 to Landman 2013). The agreed-upon practice within the VAC is thus to produce emergency and annual vulnerability information, and that is considered sufficient.

Another informal rule that has emerged out of the VAC's vulnerability discourse is a set of minimum indicators that NVACs have to report on: "...the issue of minimum sort of indicators is key, so those ones have to be in there, otherwise we will not be able to report" (Int. 34 to Landman 2013). Members explained that due to financial, capacity, and time constraints, a number of indicators would be considered first: "If the DfID⁴² delays providing money to NVAC, you find that NVAC says okay we are shifting this. We are cutting there" (Int. 18 to Landman 2013). Limited resources thus revealed the most important dimensions of vulnerability according to the VAC: "What I remember...from the disseminations last year was that some of the VACs were just presenting crop assessments. You know? They just talk about production ...What needs to be exported or imported?" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). Food availability was therefore key to reports. Closely following were food access indicators through market and livelihood assessments: "...the major problem in terms of people's food insecurity is mainly because of their accessibility... it's not necessarily because the country does not have food, but it's mainly because there are issues of access. So it ...then becomes very important for us to understand people's livelihoods" (Int. 1 to Landman 2013). These assessments have become more prominent features in assessments: "We need to invest in market assessment. Market assessments, no one really at the beginning thought this is necessary. Today, almost every year we know that we need to do that" (Int. 17 to Landman 2013).

Rural vulnerability would also be reported before urban vulnerability. With the *State of the World's Cities 2006/7* (United Nations Human Settlement Programme – UN-Habitat 2006) reporting that the global population exceeded the 50 per cent urbanised mark in 2007, the rapid urbanisation in the region should be taken into consideration in VAA. The report further states that 80 per cent of the global urban population will

⁴¹ CERF stands for the Central Emergency Response Fund, which is a collaborated effort to detail an emergency situation within a country to raise funding for interventions. Active ICPs and NVACs in a country would contribute to the CERF and raised resources would then be distributed amongst ICPs according to their mandates and specific expertise.

⁴² The United Kingdom's (UK's) Department for International Development.

be concentrated in developing countries by 2030, and the largest cities located in developing countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa (UN-Habitat 2006). Even if understanding vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity, urbanisation will have major implications. Urbanisation decreases the number of people who can produce food in the rural areas (Scotcher 2009), and a number of studies (Hussain 1990; Solomons & Gross 1995; Ruel, Haddad & Garrett 1999) have shown that urbanisation leads to involuntary lifestyle changes, especially for the poor, which in turn results in less nutritious diets. Lifestyle changes include a greater dependence on cash income to buy food (instead of producing it), weaker informal community food safety nets, and increased numbers of women dedicating more time to work, with negative consequences for childcare (Ruel et al. 1999). Aspects such as nutrition (food utilisation) and urban assessments would only be included if time, resources, and capacity allowed for it, or in the case of emergencies: "...we used to do also some urban, some urban assessments... I think we did that twice or so...[We do] not necessarily [do it] when we have funding ja, yes and no, because ... I can't say when we have got funds. Maybe when there's need also yes, when there's need. Sometimes when we did that we were still concerned that there's need to be an assessment" (Int. 28 to Landman 2013) and "I think they got some funding from UNICEF⁴³, so they did the nutrition. So it's not fixed to say that okay, every year we do the nutrition because of the funding programme" (Int. 20 to Landman 2013). The influence of climate change on vulnerability (to food security), although a hot topic in 2013 during the data gathering for this research, had not been assessed by any of the member states yet: "I know ZimVAC⁴⁴ was actually working towards relooking at their livelihoods framework, because it was not capturing the long-term issues like climate change and poverty and issues like that. It was merely focusing... on short-term kind of emergency issues. So it was not really able to capture the long-term issues" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013).

An informal rule about the minimum set of indicators to report on has thus been established. One interview explained why the VAC has become stuck on this set of indicators, including political agendas, ease, and financial, time, and technical constraints. Also note how this interviewee refers to the "normal part of the current assessment":

... if it's an agenda item as I was suggesting, then obviously it is driven by certain parties who have certain interests and that's why it is maintained. Maybe ease? I mean certainly doing what they are saying is much more difficult in terms of what kind of indicators you're using, getting the data together. It's much more involved which means more cost, more time, more technical... they struggle just to get the normal part of the current assessment done, so to add those other elements would make it even more difficult...

(Int. 24 to Landman 2013)

The formal rules shaping the research process thus include the IPC and HEA, whilst the informal rules relate to agreement that the VAC is only to produce and not advocate the use of vulnerability information in policy processes, as well as an informally agreed-upon set of minimum indicators.

7.3.2 Policy process institutions

In this section I discuss four policies clearly or most likely influenced by VAC information. It is important to note that policies are considered instruments of governing modes towards the government end of the government-governance continuum. I also consider some blockages to the transfer of knowledge to policy

⁴³ The United Nations Children's Fund.

⁴⁴ The Zimbabwean Vulnerability Assessment Committee.

processes, including the process of institutionalisation and how some of the assumptions it is built upon have resulted in very little concerted efforts to advocate for the usage of vulnerability information in national policy processes. An unexpected finding was how VAC information has been applied to monitor and refine existing policies, to write context-specific programmes, or to identify the beneficiaries for other policies and programmes. Some policies that have been written using VAC outputs might have been missed due to the sampling of only five NVACs and challenges with communication barriers. Two were identified in Zimbabwe, one relating to food and nutrition security and the other to public works. The other two policies belonged to Malawi; one related to disaster risk management, whilst the other concerned resilience. I was unable to obtain copies of any of these policies. The institutional approach applied to this research does not require the analysis of the actual policies, yet it would have been useful to compare interviewees' understanding of these policies to the actual documents. In this section I unpack some of the quotes surrounding each policy.

Policies that have been shaped by VAA

1) The Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Policy: This policy was launched in early 2013 and is thus a relatively new development. The Food and Nutrition Council (FNC), responsible for the development of this policy, is also the institution housing the ZimVAC. The FNC is thus the institution that has determined the formal rules that have manifested this policy. Almost every interviewee identified this policy as the fulfilment of the VAC policy mandate:

... it's really one of the best examples I can give right now, where it's really embedded within and it's driving the government agenda, it's pushing the policy, it's right within the policy, it's inseparable. If you look at the structure the way they've really put it, it's there, the policy is there, the various players is there, the VAC is central in informing [government and policy].

(Int. 3 to Landman 2013)

Nevertheless, two issues need to be highlighted. The first is that this policy still hinges on food security. Although one could argue that vulnerability to food insecurity is the VAC's main concern and that this policy thus sufficiently fulfils the documented VAC mandate, the other three policies informed by VAC work do not only concern food security, but relate to a broader vulnerability definition. Secondly, the ultimate aim of this policy, according to the mandate, should be to reduce vulnerability and yet according to Interviewee 30, it is positioned within the context of economic development. As argued as early as 1998 in the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report*, increased real consumption, which signifies economic development, is characterised by extreme inequality and environmental degradation that undermine the livelihoods of the most vulnerable (United Nations Development Programme – UNDP 1998). One interviewee provided an overview of this Zimbabwean food and nutrition security policy:

...the food and nutrition policy, which is quite a comprehensive policy... a multi-sectoral engagement process. So many sectors are involved from agriculture, health, from social services are also into it or maybe water... civil protection are also into it, the local government are also into it, so everyone is coming together through that, so they've got some key pillars within the food and nutrition security policy and one of the pillars is in terms of research, that's one of the key pillars ... within the policy and the agency responsible for overseeing or coordinating that research component within that policy is ... the food and nutrition council... So the FNC chairs the ZimVAC and the ZimVAC now is responsible for providing evidence to government and to stakeholders on the food...and nutrition security situation in the country... So it's an information service to government and stakeholders.

(Int. 27 to Landman 2013)

Interviewee 30 also mentioned seven commitments of this policy. The first commitment concerned support to other policies that contained aspects of food security analysis. The second related specifically to food security. Commitment three related to food shortages, and four to nutrition security. Five related to food standards. Six related to the provision of food security early warning information to government and International Cooperating Partners (ICPs). The final commitment related to creating structures and building capacity to implement the policy. The interviewee also identified various governmental partners responsible for the implementation of the policy: the President and Cabinet, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Health, the Zimbabwean Statistical Unit, and the FNC (Int. 30 to Landman 2013).

The FNC is thus identified as a formal institution, responsible for shaping rules according to which ZimVAC actors will behave. Furthermore, the food and nutrition security policy will also institutionalise some rules for ZimVAC operations. If the seven commitments are to be reached, and the FNC and ZimVAC are responsible for informing and coordinating the implementation of this policy through various governmental partners, its behaviour would need to be shaped accordingly, i.e. focusing on food and nutrition security.

2) The Zimbabwean Productive Community Work Policy: This policy is a feedback loop between the Zimbabwean context and government structures. Its aim is to identify the most-needed infrastructure within vulnerable communities through collaboration with members, and to then pay unemployed community members to build community assets better supporting livelihoods. The policy thus aims to simultaneously build long-term infrastructure, to enable communities to have access to water and markets for example, but also provide vulnerable people with temporary employment opportunities and income in the short-term. Only one interviewee claimed that this policy was informed by ZimVAC information, as repeated vulnerability patterns in VAA indicated the need for longer-term approaches to addressing vulnerability. Two interviewees provided descriptions of this policy:

...productive community work, it's our policy framework that has been to a great extent influenced by the ZimVAC, because we're looking at the trend since 2002 until now. There are some critical aspects that the communities have always ... identified as their top priorities for development. The chief among them is irrigation. ... every year you know we have communities identifying access to water ...and also access to markets, the issue [of a lack of] transport infrastructure. So in that spirit we have designed the productive community works policy framework, which brings together the various partners that are in development, that are engaging communities to come up with community assets that can assist them in building their livelihood basically... We have finalised it and we had presented it to the minister before. I think it was around March this year, but because of the political changes that have taken place we again would need it to take it up through the political system, through the minister and you know get approval from cabinet, but in as such much as we are concerned from a technical point of view, we actually have started implementation of that policy.

(Int. 25 to Landman 2013)

...it is inclined with the government productive works policy, whereby government says no, we don't need to keep giving people [food aid], but let them work on some assets or some facility, which will remain with the community and which will make sure that they can enhance their future for that food security... the programme is a WFP⁴⁵ programme, implemented by WFP, but the policy was from government.

(Int. 27 to Landman 2013)

⁴⁵ World Food Programme.

This policy clearly depends on a network of actors. When discussing WFP programmes with another interviewee, the Productive Community Work Programme came up as a WFP programme. Infrastructure built by WFP projects included irrigation systems, roads, dams, etc. WFP would pay beneficiaries in food or cash. Both interviewees above situated this programme within a larger national policy and the first claimed its creation was inspired by VAC information. WFP's cash or food for work programmes became popular around 2005, as WFP attempted to move away from food aid. It may thus be that WFP, which is also involved in VAC work, used VAA information to motivate government to establish a policy that would bring various development partners onto the same page. If this is the case and the policy is well-implemented, I would argue that this policy could contribute significantly to reducing communities' vulnerability. It would provide temporary employment to help people get back on their feet, and leave behind long-term infrastructure that contribute to community resilience. Although VAC outputs could have inspired this policy, which is a governing tool applied by government to coordinate development partners and resources around long-term community asset creation, the policy does not significantly influence VAC operations. As discussed later in this chapter, VAC information may be used to identify beneficiaries for the programme, but that would not require the VAC to change or manipulate its operations. The VAC can continue to identify communities vulnerable to food insecurity, and this programme will come in to address it by increasing access to water and markets. A number of interviews also mentioned a similar Public Works Programme in Malawi, but instead of suggesting its development was informed by VAC information, these interviews explained how NVAC outputs would be used to identify its beneficiaries, as also discussed later in this section.

3) The Malawian Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and 4) The Malawian Resilience Policy: These two Malawian policies are presented together, because the second was explained as a natural progression of the first. The Department of Disaster Risk Management developed both, but neither has been approved or implemented yet. The first was drafted in 2010, while the development of the second started in 2012 in collaboration with the UNDP. Referring specifically to the disaster risk reduction policy, one interview commented that: "...in Malawi ...the policy-making process takes a little bit of time, so we started in 2010, now we have a draft which we'll be submitting to the cabinet committee" (Int. 22 to Landman 2013). The same interviewee also explained the link to the Resilience Policy:

Then last year we tried to move like a little bit, a little step further from just using it for response. Last year with UNDP we tried to, using the VAC information, we sat down and tried to formulate a resilience strategy...the VAC report has been coming now and again like each and every year and it's almost maybe, we have like the same, have it your traditional districts, where you... each and every year we have been respondent. The VAC has been identifying households with [vulnerability], year in, year out. So we said okay, ... apart from just bringing this relief items, the response programme, maybe we should look at the bigger picture... try to build resilience and try to reduce the vulnerability of the community as well, your households in this particular instance... by the time the resilience strategy was being formulated, at least we had made a lot of progress on the [disaster risk reduction] policy. ...[the resilience strategy] builds on that, because the good thing with the policy is you know we have the HFA, the Hugo Framework for Action...which is like a blue print for disaster risk management... so most of ... our policy statements and blue print are just trying to localise that global framework.

(Int. 22 to Landman 2013)

The comments by Interviewee 22 thus indicate that a development partner used VAC work to do some form

of trend analysis to write the resilience policy. The VAC thus inspired the policy, but again was not required to change its operations in any way. The VAC did not have to do the trend analysis—a development partner stepped in to do it. It could also be argued that VAC information did not inspire the resilience policy, but that it was instead used to refine and contextualise the policy based on the larger HFA framework.

Interviewees 17 and 22 also made reference to the resilience policy: “...within the department of disaster management affairs to develop I think a resilience policy. I know that some action plan was launched at some point ...which has to do with the resilience” (Int. 17 to Landman 2013) and “We are also linked to a new policy... which is being developed. I think it's still in the process of being approved... they do use VAA information to see which areas...they have looked at our database and you know try to map out areas that are inconsistently showing signs of ... vulnerability every year” (Int. 21 to Landman 2013). These two Malawian policies consider vulnerability as broader than only food security. It may just be the specific approach of the Department of Disaster Management in Malawi, yet if taking the documented VAC mandate as referring to vulnerability in general, and imagining what kind of policies the VAC would need to inspire to reduce vulnerability, the Resilience Policy—while not explained fully—seems promising. Although possibly inspired by VAC information, or refined by the application of VAC information, these policies have not led to rules determining VAC operations. Including trend analysis into its operations may inspire more policies with a broader resilience focus.

Although not informing new policies per se, one interviewee commented that in countries with existing food security policies, VAC information is applied to refine them: “Yes and... for those countries which already had existing food security policies, they...are being refuelled and refined using existing information, which they are getting from the vulnerability assessments” (Int. 6 to Landman 2013). One interviewee from the Mozambican Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) confirmed this by explaining how VAC information has motivated the inclusion of a malnutrition aspect in their food security strategy: “In our policies now we have the ... how can I say it in English? Mal-nutritional plan? I don't know how can I say. Mal-nutritional plan? Our policies is changing, is improving” (Int. 12 to Landman 2013). The argument could also be made that the Zimbabwean Community Works Policy, and the Malawian Risk Reduction and Resilience Policies were merely refined using VAC information and not actually inspired by the information. Further research is required to clarify the connection.

Reflecting on the discussion about policies best suited to address vulnerability (1.4.3), these four policies are not suited to deal with the uncertainty of complex challenges in southern Africa. They are not emergent or flexible to adapt to changing contexts. Within an understanding of governing through government, these policies were designed to address a specific problem identified at a specific point in time. The use of VAA information to formulate and refine policies may however be evidence of an attempt to better contextualise policies.

Drawing on the discussion about key entry points for policies to address vulnerability (1.4.3), it would seem that the Zimbabwean policies, although not suited to addressing broader vulnerability, are nevertheless working on system properties, addressing sensitivity to food and nutrition insecurity, and building capacity

through infrastructure development pre-exposure. The Malawian policies are also focused on system changes, yet seem to reflect more deliberately on external processes or disasters more typically associated with vulnerability that is broader than only food security.

With some structural adjustments, these policies could address regional vulnerability. Policies would need to focus on all four policy entry points identified in 1.4.3: system and context interventions pre-exposure, shielding activities during exposure, and post-exposure re-building and adaptation. A key requirement would be transparent evaluation and monitoring systems, not only of the efficacy of policies, but also of contextual changes. Policies need to be much more flexible in order to adapt to changing contexts. Consequently the budgeting and capacity structures supporting policies would also need to be flexible.

Blockages to the transfer of knowledge to policy processes

As also argued before, there is a general lack of deliberate and strategic engagement with policy makers to advocate for the use of vulnerability information. With regards to rules determining the behaviour around research processes, the nature of emergency food security information does not require extensive dissemination efforts. There have also been other reasons linked specifically to policy processes for the lack of engaging policy makers. These policy-related reasons are linked to the RVAA programme and its assumptions informing the formalisation of NVACs within their respective governments. This process of formalisation driven through the RVAA programme is referred to as institutionalisation, and as argued here has also become a rule within the VAC, which has in turn produced additional informal rules. Upon asking interviewees the purpose of institutionalisation they would often confuse the answer with the motivation for a VAC structure, thus regarding institutionalising as inherent to establishing an NVAC: “Institutionalisation therefore provides a platform and a deliberate way of coordinating efforts towards building consensus around understanding VA issues in the country” (Int. 1 extended to Landman 2013). Although eager to institutionalise, both South Africa and Swaziland had indicated that coordination is possible without institutionalisation; this separates the motivation for the establishment of an NVAC and the purpose of institutionalising it afterwards. The Interviewee 1’s comment is thus more relevant to the motivation of establishing an NVAC than to institutionalising one.

There are certain gains and losses when formalising NVACs. If successfully and ideally embedded within an ideal government, gains would include greater political support within a country, an institutionalised committed focus to reducing regional vulnerability, and a national budget allocation to match. It would also improve the capacity of national governments, rendering the need for international support and interventions progressively less and eventually superfluous. It would conveniently create easy access for policy makers to information that may inform better contextualised policies that will reduce vulnerability. “In reality [in these] type of democratic countries, things work well [for NVACs]...they will eventually make significant influence in government. It’s because they have a stable government, they have a government which has processes...” (Int. 7 to Landman 2013).

Three of these ideal gains are also used as the motivation for formalising NVACs within the context of the RVAA programme: 1) Increased political leadership and support: “...the good parts of institutionalisation is

the obvious one, which is you know getting the governments to go on the exercise and own the system. You know transform it into a system which is not informal but it's a recognised system... if it's part of what the government is doing, it's part of the government structure, they will have to listen to it" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013). "...they need to be formalised, ...because until you know you're a formal institution with an identity, ... there is actually no leadership and it's difficult to have your members working jointly as a team with the mandate, because ... if it's not institutionalised, people really don't understand their function" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013) and "...if you are within government and you speak... it carries some weight... To say okay, [the] minister of Economic Planning... want to ... present a [NVAC] report, ja so now it's the ministry, which is government...presenting and everybody listens...because it's already within government" (Int. 21 to Landman 2013).

2) Increased financial support from national governments: "It therefore helps with sustainability to embed the [NVAC] in government, because it could assist the... government with VA and Food Security information and thus government could allocate funds to it and thus [ensure] sustainability" (Int. to Landman 2013). "...in normal conditions government should take ownership. It is desirable that the government takes ownership. It will be desirable that ownership means that the government pays most of the expenses" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013). "...government can also bring in their resources and you know if it is ... institutionalised within government, it means you have sustainable resources. Ja, you don't have to go out to donors all the time because then government will be providing funding from the annual current budget" (Int. 21 to Landman 2013). Or at least payment of dedicated government officials to do VAC work: "...these people volunteering their time coming from various organisations, that's why we are ... there's advocating of the VACs being institutionalised. One of the issues of institutionalisation is to make sure that there's a VAC, which is formerly dedicated. There's a structure in office which is formerly dedicated to VAC activities with somebody employed and being paid by the government to do it" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013).

3) Improved policy making: "I would say institutionalisation is very important, because it brings together all those sectors...so they can talk one language in terms of the final results and the government should be the one to...the government has the policy, has the mandate, and it can easily influence some major decisions, in terms of programming and interventions" (Int. 19 to Landman 2013). This interviewee may be right if the nature of the NVAC is multi or inter-sectoral, yet one NVAC within a specialised unit in a dedicated ministry may not be able to bring together different sectors. Institutionalisation therefore does not automatically result in collaboration. Furthermore, if the policy processes within a government are already challenged, relying on existing structures may also prevent effective policy formation. One interviewee commented that although in one member state an information and policy unit was set up to work together within an agricultural department, the unit and department have been working separately: "In fact ...okay ...I think it hasn't been really happening the way it's supposed to be happening, because ideally the information unit should be generating information that is then used by the people from programmes, [as] they design programmes. Like for instance, if the guys who design interventions understand the people's livelihoods, then using that information they can ...generate interventions that are relevant to the particular people...And then the policy makers obviously would use that information to inform their policies. That is how it's supposed to flow... how can I, how can I put this? I guess again it's a matter of there hasn't really been information that is so

disaggregated in such a way that it's able to inform the programs and policies" (Int. 1 to Landman 2013). Nevertheless, the same interviewee used this disconnect between the information and policy units as another motivation to establish an NVAC, which according to the interviewee would address this issue.

Another interviewee added an important motivation for institutionalisation: "And you make also people accountable. If anyone doesn't do [his or her] part, if it is not institutionalised, you cannot hold anyone accountable. As an example, if I don't provide the sampling frame right, if it's not institutionalised, who [will be held accountable]? No one! But if it's institutionalised, people will say: 'No this is your responsibility'. Why? [Because] we institutionalised, that's why" (Int. 26 to Landman 2013). Furthermore, the NVACs that are embedded in their respective governments are doing comparatively better than those that are not: "Those that have a greater support and are embedded within government and they are recognised, they're the ones which are most successful. Do you see?" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). NVACs that are not institutionalised obviously observe the successes of institutionalised NVACs and are then motivated to be institutionalised as well.

However, in the countries where the formalisation process had been completed, these gains have come with consequent losses, because the process is fraught with obstacles linked to less-than-ideal contexts. Contexts differ and governments, especially in developing countries, struggle with countless challenges: "If really the democracy, [the] democratic discourse within the country has not advanced so much ... it can really be difficult" (Int. 7 to Landman 2013). The losses accompanying the gains of formalisation in less-than-ideal governments include: 1) The politicisation of vulnerability information, including refusal by government to release information until altered, or the co-option of vulnerability information for political purposes: "...government flexed some muscles and now they are ...getting ... powers to more or less... should I say control? But I mean influence our ways of working, ja. ...you cannot release the report without government approving it, so that on its own it means the government has control somehow" (Int. 21 to Landman 2013) and "...now institutionalisation wants to come with issues, because the more the government pays for it...the more they interfere, that's how I'll put it" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013).

2) A loss of independence: "...it's good because it's country driven, but I find it, there's need for some independence...You want that organisation which is completely going to be independent" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013), "...even if it's institutionalised, it should remain ... a consortium...a consensual platform, [it] should be based on objectivity... transparency...for the sake of credibility" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013) and "...we're supposed to be independent, but because if you are within government, it's very difficult for you to be totally independent, because you are in the armpit of government" (Int. 21 to Landman 2013).

3) Very little to no financial support from national governments and thus a continued dependence on external international funding: "...institutionalisation, what is key mostly was the sustainability part of it, which I'm yet to see that it's really sustainable, because I think the government is not really allocating adequate funds into this NVAC. We have been solely depending on the DfID⁴⁶. If the DfID delays providing money to NVAC, you find that NVAC says okay we are shifting this. We are cutting there" (Int. 18 to Landman 2013).

⁴⁶ The United Kingdom's (UK's) Department for International Development.

4) Due to already challenged national policy processes, very little to no policy outputs that actually effectively work to measurably reduce vulnerability: Many have argued that the VAC is fulfilling its 2005 mandate through the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy, but the issues surrounding this output include the short period of time it has been active, its concentrated focus on food and nutrition security, and a lack of monitoring and evaluation to determine its implications for regional vulnerability. Although four policy outputs have been discussed, three are called into question, as their formation may merely have been refined using VAC outputs and not actually have been inspired by them. Two interviewees also reflected on this lack of policy outputs: "...it's not that people do not know, but the issue is the RVAC⁴⁷ [needs] to come [up with] compressive policy recommendations and maybe ...a throw of programmes, but ... apparent[ly] it is obvious – it's in VAC report" (said in a sarcastic tone) [Int. 16 to Landman 2013]. "It is essentially the [government] office that should use those outputs, as the flagship for informing policy decisions and policy formulation. It's so unfortunate, I mean, I hate to talk about this, but it is key, because, we've been talking about this for the past ten years now, same problems not solutions, and it's frustrating to be honest, but, well, we believe that with the proper functioning of [this government department] and recognising how useful those outputs are for policy decision making and policy formulation, it is the right office to say this output should be used to inform policy making" (Int. 33 to Landman 2013).

Closely related to the lack of efforts to engage with policy makers to advocate for the use of vulnerability information is the lack of efforts to translate VAA information into more user-friendly formats: "...what I'm trying to say is that between the policy making and the technical layers, there is a barrier of sorts and what is clear to scientist may not necessarily become clear ever to...the broader community of the policy makers" (Int. 5 to Landman 2013). During the 2013 Synthesis Meeting, the ZimVAC had for the very first time translated its findings into a user-friendly PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the key ZimVAC findings in non-threatening language: "The way we write the report, the report is almost like in PowerPoint format already, so it's a very simplified way of presenting information. I think this is the first in my year of working in public health nutrition, [where I've] seen a presentation of a report in a way that anyone can pick it up and read it and know what it's saying. Very, very simple, but also I think under each section there's you know ... we pull out key messages, key recommendations, key conclusions, so again it's quite simplified. It's not a thick technical document... any person across the border, whether it's a policy maker, a technical person or just a lay person can be able to pick it up and say, okay, this is what this means" (Int. 32 to Landman). Interestingly, another NVAC interpreted this as a lack of quality and quantity in the data, which indicates a lack of appreciation for simpler formats: "Zimbabwe for instance, I'm sorry to say, but it just, in their report, it's just the PowerPoint... that's what their reports are like. In fact, in their PowerPoint presentation, they are very detailed, but I think even the region, has actually, commented [positively about us] for being one of the countries that produces [a full] report" (Int. 34 to Landman 2013).

Weighing up the losses and gains, one interviewee stated the following about the process of institutionalisation: "...in the end you need to weigh the advantages, when you are doing something, when the advantages are much greater than the disadvantages, at least you would say I'm doing something" (Int. 6

⁴⁷ Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee.

to Landman 2013). That is one approach to the current challenges with institutionalisation; another is acknowledging that institutionalisation has been poorly structured and being more strategic with the process going forward: “Institutionalisation? I think is ... a major challenge. Right from the time these VACs... started, the idea of institutionalisation, [it] was not well conceptualised. Each member state has his own unique challenges in terms of where the VAC secretariat should be housed” (Int. 6 to Landman). “I think it’s desirable to institutionalise you know. I would also push for it. Though I would say let’s institutionalise in a certain way, not the way they’ve been doing so far. So I would personally I would ... say let’s do a sort analysis of institutionalisation. Of course we want to keep the strengths, but [we need to ask how we can address] the weaknesses and the threats...we should be careful to make sure that we don’t lose the independence of the system...put in the document what creates this ... system, the secretariat ...this will be your role, but you recognise that stakeholders will have this and that and that role. We’ve completely removed the vetting power of stakeholders, which was there before” (Int. 4 to Landman 2013). This interview thus comments on a loss of a rule in which a variety of actors had power to keep VAC activities in check. “...a very critical analysis of the role of VACs and a careful study of institutions and each member states including those where they are still struggling with institutionalisation, is the best way to eventually doing institutionalisation of the VACs” (Int. 7 to Landman 2013). Although still advocating institutionalisation, these interviewees call for a more structured and critical approach that acknowledges and addresses the challenges of the process. As discussed above, these challenges include the politicisation of vulnerability information, a loss of independence, continued financial dependence on external funders, and limited policy outputs and outcomes. These reflections on institutionalisation call for a critical evaluation of the process to inform a revised strategy that would need to preserve the independence of the VAC platform, define the role of the NVAC secretariat, take specific contexts into consideration, and also protect the vetting power of a variety of stakeholders.

7.3.3 VAC institutions shaping both research and policy activities

As detailed in Chapter Four, the story of the VAC’s regional Centre of Excellence (CoE) started in 2006. The main aims of the CoE were to meet the capacity gaps of NVACs. It would do so by operating as a hub drawing on other educational institutes and curriculums in the region. The African Centre for Food Security (ACFS) at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) was selected to develop and host the CoE. The ACFS was tasked to develop a long-term capacity building and strategic plan. In early May 2007, the RVAA Programme Management Unit (PMU) started acting on behalf of the SADC FANR as principal partner to the CoE. The CoE and PMU partnered to develop a short-term one-year VAA training programme to run between October 2007 and December 2008 to meet the general backlog of regional demands for capacity building through short-term training events. It was thought that the programme could pilot foundation courses for the longer-term ACFS plan. The ACFS began bilateral negotiations with identified collaborating partners, but these were stalled because of funding issues. After a few attempts by the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) to resolve the issue, it was decided that all CoE activities would be suspended until participants’ sponsorship, costs for module development, and consultancy fees had been clarified. It was not evident who would be responsible for these clarifications.

At the 2013 AOM it was apparent that the CoE had not become a fixed VAC institution yet, and that it was

still struggling with proposal and planning phases. One delegate at the 2013 AOM commented that the ACFS had not been effective due to a change of leadership just after the launch of the ACFS as CoE. The delegate explained that the person in charge of the ACFS, although most likely an excellent academic, did not have the leadership skills required to firmly establish the ACFS as the VAC CoE and drive regional VAA trainings. No one has been actively driving a coordinated training process. The VAC has consequently relied on shorter courses in specific contexts to fill training needs: "...a lot of, of the training that the [RVAA] programme does itself, is really mentoring you know, training on the job during assessments and doing, doing training one, training before their assessments" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). Without central training coordination to build capacity, I argue that capacity has been inadequately developed: "So actually that training and capacity building component [is] one challenge that we have been having in the region and, and we have ... all been products of that" (Int. 6 to Landman 2013), "...we still have a challenge along those line[s] to really tailor-make the training [to]... meet needs of the VACs and how far we should go to, should we make it short courses [or] should you make it a degree programmes? And we still have challenges on how to build and then gain capacity in the region" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013).

As also discussed in Chapter Six, the power of the RVAA PMU has also meant that it can provide resources and technical assistance as it sees fit. This power dynamic and a lack of standardisation across the training programmes and application processes that NVACs must undertake to obtain assistance have resulted in an unequal distribution of technical skills across the VAC system. Furthermore, the weak CoE may be one of the main contributing factors to a consultancy culture in the VAC, where a significant amount of work is outsourced to experts from ICPs or even external consultants: "...when you're a technical expert in a committee [it is] like[ly] that you [will] end up doing the job. You end up being the one who creates the linkages and you know, bring things together and that, and let it bounce" (Int. 4 to Landman 2013) and "...the experience of working with this VACs is such that if you're a technical advisor and especially if you're a dedicated technical advisor to a specific country, you'll find it very challenging to build capacity, because quite often people are very relaxed and ... they lack hard work in government, so you end up doing everything and if you're not careful you'll block ten years and, and realise you'll still walk away without building any capacity" (Int. 7 to Landman 2013).

This dependency on external consultants has become an acceptable practice within the VAC: "We actually have approached SADC to assist us in terms of technical assistance... and financial support. Obviously they've agreed to getting us a consultant who'll be working directly with us to come up with that strategic plan" (Int. 1 to Landman 2013), "...when it comes to food security monitoring, ...the national government is the lead. It's one, which is supposed to release the information, but it taps on the available expertise that [is available in] various organisations. Right and, and this has been working very well over the years..." (Int. 6 to Landman 2013), "... these working groups sometimes need to have technical assistance, so, you know the UN agency and civil society even donor, they have people who have skills in each area, and what we did, what we have been doing is to use this skills of our partners to improve the capacity of the government, you know, to implement the food security and nutrition agenda. Otherwise ... sometimes we have to hire a consultant to support ... working groups" (Int. 10 to Landman 2013). Although engaging with relevant stakeholders to gather information necessary for contracted work, consultants are not embedded within the

VAC policy arrangement and while identifying challenges and opportunities, would not necessarily remain to implement solutions. Research and policy processes are thus kept separate. This consultancy culture can be considered another informal rule guiding VAC members' behaviour around addressing vulnerability issues. This culture also further propagates a lack of sustainable internal capacity, as it removes the need for capacity building.

On reflection, one of the more useful achievements of the VAC system has been its multi-agency approach and organisation. It has been an inherent part of the system since its inception and has remained intact. An example of the benefits of the multi-agency nature of the VAC is a 2012 study conducted to assess a growing concern that information pertaining to longer-term vulnerability issues had not been adequately generated or utilised within the VAC. It was entitled *A Capacity Review of the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee System and Recommendations on Areas that Require Strengthening* (Gandure & Drimie 2012). The study was commissioned by the RVAC and funded by WFP. During informal conversations with the authors of the paper, it became apparent that the study was motivated by WFP's concerns that governments were beginning to exclude development partners from VAA work. A decrease in external funding and technical support would not have been an issue if governments had sufficient capacity to continue independently, but the continued politicisation of vulnerability information, the exclusion of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in VAA work in Zimbabwe in 2013, and the lack of transparent monitoring and evaluation instruments to track the implications of VAA work indicate the need for continued involvement of development partners. The 2012 capacity review also clearly advocates for the continued support of development partners. Even so, as argued in the introduction to this thesis, development partners should ultimately aim to capacitate governments in such a way that their continued involvement becomes unnecessary. Through its multi-agency nature, the VAC has thus produced self-regulatory measures, indicative of governance. Another example is how the Malawian Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) lost its position as one of the most well regarded NVACs after misrepresenting IPC outputs (Int. 13 to Landman 2013). One interviewee also commented that the RVAC and RVAA PMU were extremely critical about the actions of the MVAC: "...the RVAC had realised that ... there was something wrong. [They were] giving [the MVAC] the resources [and] the means to capacitate itself [in IPC assessments]... to engage in [a] credible, analytical tool and exercise, [yet the MVAC did] not take the responsibility. [They were] not leading it and [the RVAA PMU] was quite vocal about this" (Int. 13 to Landman 2013).

The fact that so many VAC members of unformalised NVACs participate in the system voluntarily, without monetary compensation or VAC work being part of their job descriptions, is another indication of a soft-policy instrument and governance. Volunteering members express finding the work inspiring and a commitment to reducing regional vulnerability. It is thus not necessarily the notion of volunteerism that should be supported, but that VAC members should be selected based on their commitment to the work. Self-regulatory measures and volunteerism are examples of soft-policy instruments applied in governance, as explained in Chapter Two. Although the VAC has compiled a mandate in which it binds itself to inform national policies, its multi-agency membership and unformalised nature seems to be producing soft-policy outputs instead. These soft-policy instruments are also better equipped to handle issues of uncertainty in VAA, due to their flexibility and

capacity to adapt to change. They are currently overlooked outputs, yet should be acknowledged and supported towards reaching the ultimate VAC outcome—reducing vulnerability.

7.3.4 The use of VAC outputs beyond policy

An unexpected finding during the research was how government departments used VAC outputs to develop context-specific programmes, target beneficiaries for existing programmes, and monitor such initiatives, as well as other policies, although not necessarily applying VAA to inform the formation of national policies aiming to reduce vulnerability. It was an unexpected finding because I was not actively investigating national programmes: “...we cannot claim here to say because of [NVAC] reports this policy was developed, no...but they do use our information to improve on the policy, as to review policies and to measure, measure performance of those strategies” (Int. 21 to Landman 2013). Such initiatives included:

- 1) Public Work Programmes: “...we have the ZimVAC identifying the most food insecure districts and over the last ten or so years, we more or less have the same districts that are worse off than others and for the productive community works, those are the districts... that we are targeting” (Int. 25 to Landman 2013);
- 2) A Fertiliser and Agriculture Extension Programme: “Like you know, input support to small scale farmers? [It] is actually this type of [vulnerability] report that informs them [in terms of which] ... geographic areas, if they have to subsidise” (Int. 4 to Landman 2013);
- 3) Social Protection Programmes: “In terms of government, VAA information ... has helped us a lot to programme what we call social protection programmes. Now we call them social support programmes” (Int. 19 to Landman 2013). “...when the social protection people want to maybe to increase the number of beneficiaries, they always go to our report to check, okay in this district, ja the baseline was like this, now the indicators are showing it’s worsening, so we should increase ja, or in this place things are improving. Then maybe we can remove some beneficiaries, graduate or something like that” (Int. 21 to Landman 2013); and
- 4) Environmental Programmes: “...the information from the assessments is able to provide some further insight to government in terms of environmental status of particular areas, what these areas have in common – the areas that where people are vulnerable, what they have in common...[such as] what is the likelihood of those people... cutting trees, and burning charcoal? How can we therefore intervene? ... What programs should we take to those areas?” (Int. 15 to Landman 2013).

One interviewee also explained that VAC information was one of the catalysts that convinced the Zimbabwean government to adopt a multi-currency in 2008. It became clear that people were no longer using Zimbabwean dollars, but had switched over to foreign currency. The Zimbabwean government decided to approve the multi-currency: “I think representations were made and then at very high levels and I ... would expect that the following certain ... policy changes that were then implemented. Then, well there’s a possibility that these were taken on board but we are not the only voice, I think there are also others who contributed, but it was made very clear in some of those assessments that some of the macroeconomic conditions were working against food access” (Int. 30 to Landman 2013).

VAC information was used to evaluate policies and programmes: “So, MVAC ... has specific indicators that we are feeding into, in these various policies, the agriculture policy and food security and the agriculture and nutrition food se-, nutrition policy. The MVAC has been assigned some indicators that we are supposed to follow up and report on. I think there are five indicators if I’m not wrong” (Int. 21 to Landman). VAC information was also used to evaluate overall growth and development in countries: “So there’s a section under which we are supposed to fit in and to feed our information. As I said it’s early warning, so it has to do with the poverty monitoring, food security, ja so we fit in there” (Int. 21 to Landman 2013). In Chapter Six, it was also discussed that the South African Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SAVAC) would be set up with the aim of providing the information necessary for the monitoring and evaluation of programmes implemented under the 2030 plan of the National Planning Commission (NPC). These monitoring and evaluation initiatives are a good indication of practices or rules emerging outside the top-down regulations defined by the VAC mandate.

As already discussed in Chapter Five, ICPs also use the information for the development of and targeting in their programmes. Although forming part of the VAC mandate, informal consensus amongst VAC actors has bolstered the rule that the purpose of the VAC is mainly to develop information for use by development partners: “...we select our beneficiaries like for the seasonal targeted assistance, it is based on the [NVAC outputs]” (Int. 27 to Landman 2013) and “...response agencies like NGOs...who are into food distribution and others who are [into] ...WASH, water and sanitation... they actually wait for the results to use...for their response mechanisms” (Int. 28 to Landman 2013). The humanitarian response committee, as explained by interviewees, consists of different members from the group of UN agencies and other ICPs active in each member state: “...the main users? Normally, it’s the humanitarian response committee” (Int. 20 to Landman). VAC information is useful for annual emergency responses to vulnerability, but has not yet been used to target those same areas to reduce vulnerability: “...you know the type of hazards that are there... and the vulnerable communities and ... even the magnitude of shocks over a period of time. Such that I think it should be possible this time around to say, okay, if we have a normal year, an average year, then we know that these areas are going to be affected in this way. At least you know such that, that information can actually be used in the contingency plan” (Int. 17 to Landman 2013). Nevertheless, the ripple effect of the use of VAA in these programmes should not be underestimated. In a context where many policies and the resources to implement them are weak, the work of development partners becomes crucial in addressing vulnerability. Furthermore, as has been demonstrated by the WFP food or cash for work programmes in Zimbabwe, development partner programmes could eventually indirectly influence policy directions.

There have also been some non-policy and non-programming uses of vulnerability information. National governments use VAC information to appeal for international humanitarian assistance: “...most of them...probably they just ignore it, but they are clever, because if they want to declare an emergency they know if their voices have to be heard by the donors, they really have to mention [VAC findings]” (Int. 4 to Landman 2013). A number of countries use VAC outputs to budget: “It’s become a budgeting tool. It also is a targeting tool and it really just helps government focus on the immediate and urgent needs and where those [are] that need that” (Int. 30 to Landman). NVACs also use the information to ask for larger budgetary allocations from government: “...they would really use that to negotiate for, for budgetary allocation for VAC

activities" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013).

Smaller NGOs active in various regions of member states use it to raise funds for the work they do: "...we also have the NGOs. I think when they're requesting for their funding they're based on the MVAC reports... so their funders, financially, they will say okay, you are saying that you need to fund which [project]? What does the MVAC say? So they base their activities on MVAC [outputs]" (Int. 20 to Landman 2013). These NGOs also use the information to write project proposals: "...they can you know tailor their proposal based on the findings of the MVAC report during that period" (Int. 21 to Landman).

VAC outputs, and especially harvest results, are used for inter-regional trading: "...it will be sent to their principals. So at a country level when it's sent to Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe will know that South Africa's got so much food stock, which can be imported to Zimbabwe" (Int. 9 to Landman 2013). It is also slowly being used to compile vulnerability profiles of areas and to do trend analysis: "...some of the information that the VAC is generating has been useful in informing in terms of areas, if you see an area three, four times you know, [it is vulnerable for] consecutive years. It's food insecure. You start wondering what is the issue there? Because there are some areas in Malawi, which if it's not a flood, then it's going to be a drought or both or diseases in this area, so it's actually to realise that some of the areas are actually more prone to some hazards and I think over time if you just look at the VAC reports from around 2004 or 2006 to now, you actually see that this year there was this shock, this following year there was this shock, this following year there was this shock and some of the shocks are actually the same shocks" (Int. 17 to Landman 2013).

Finally, it is also important to add that the usage of VAC information is not being monitored or evaluated by the VAC: "...they don't monitor how the VAC results are being used for now to really go and see have they been used although they can see, in some cases they can see but it's not a deliberate attempt" (Int. 3 to Landman 2013). It may well be that there is an assumption that continued vulnerability assessments would indicate a reduction in vulnerability, yet there has not been a study to do a comprehensive trend analysis of regional vulnerability.

7.4 Conclusion

Drawing on already presented findings from Chapters Five and Six, as well as further findings from the VAC document analysis and interviews, this chapter concerned the final dimension of the PAA, namely institutions or rules of the game. A brief theoretical exploration revealed a common set of assumptions about institutions, shared by different fields of study. The theoretical discussion provided a set of key questions to ask as a means of grounding the empirical investigation in the PAA. These questions included: How has this rule come into existence? Has it been influenced by the remnants of preceding institutional schemas? What meaning or stability does it give to the VAC policy arrangement? How has it influenced or dispersed throughout the rest of the arrangement? Is it deteriorating or being reinforced? Not every question was relevant to every rule, but these questions nevertheless provided a useful way to critically engage with the data. Both formal and informal institutions were considered in the governing and policy arrangement levels of the VAC. It was argued that for knowledge to be effectively translated into policy, the boundaries between research and policy processes had to be porous, yet rules were divided and discussed as they related to

each separate process. The reason for this being that research and policy processes in the VAC have mostly been kept separate, which has been a major blockage for the transferal of knowledge into policy. Some rules were also indicated as relevant to both processes.

Firstly, with regards to rules guiding research processes, it was found that the vulnerability discourse has led to the institutionalisation of two research frameworks, the IPC and HEA, which although advocating for longer-term responses, are perpetuating the VAC's focus on vulnerability specific to food security. The vulnerability discourse has also resulted in an informal agreed-upon set of minimum indicators, prioritising the availability and access dimensions of food security, specifically in rural areas. The utilisation dimension and urban assessments are only conducted when resources allow. As the region is rapidly urbanising, this lack of commitment to urban assessments has major implications for regional vulnerability. The resilience dimension of food security is not catered for yet, although climate change discourses have started to take shape. Furthermore, the discourse around the purpose of the VAC as generating emergency information for use by development partners in aid programmes, has resulted in little to no efforts towards engaging policy makers in designing the research process or advocating the use of research outputs. The common understanding or rule is thus that once the VAC has generated emergency food insecurity information, its work is done. A few critical reflections did indicate that there are exceptions to this rule, however.

Secondly, with regards to rules guiding policy processes, the process of institutionalisation and its implications for policy processes were thoroughly considered. Institutionalisation has become a formal rule within the RVAA programme that determines the flow of resources and the allocation of technical support from the RVAA PMU to NVACs. An inherent assumption of institutionalisation is that the formalisation of NVACs within government structures results in policy outputs. However, without any efforts to support existing government policy processes, institutionalisation assumes that government policy processes are working well. As was discussed, this is not the case. The VAC's mandated responsibility to inform policy processes is thus shifted onto already challenged national policy processes. Another argument used to support institutionalisation is increased political and financial support from governments, as well as increased accountability. Institutionalised NVACs have, however, indicated that the process comes with a number of sacrifices. The outputs of institutionalised NVACs are often politicised, as ruling parties within governments have learned how to use food security information to their political advantage. Institutionalised NVACs have also lost independence, with governments controlling not only the release of vulnerability information, but also participation in VAA processes. Institutionalisation has not come with the expected increased governmental budget allocations for VAC work, as even the most currently successful NVAC remains dependent on international funding. Similarly, institutionalisation has not led to a significant increase in policy outputs, although it must be said that the formation of the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy was significantly shaped by ZimVAC outputs. Nevertheless, this policy perpetuates a narrow vulnerability focus to only food and nutrition insecurity within the larger mandate of economic development. The institution within which the ZimVAC is housed, the FNC, is a formal institution shaping ZimVAC operations and the new policy will also be applied as a guiding framework for ZimVAC outputs. Both the FNC and the policy can thus be considered formal rules guiding ZimVAC actors to apply resources and power to address vulnerability, understood as vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity.

Another institutionalised blockage to the transferral of research to policy that aims to reduce regional vulnerability has been a consultancy culture within the VAC. Although engaging with relevant stakeholders to gather information necessary for contracted work, consultants are not embedded within the VAC policy arrangement, and while identifying challenges and opportunities, would not necessarily remain to implement solutions. Research and policy processes are thus kept separate. This consultancy culture was driven by the lack of a strong CoE to drive standardised regional training in VAA. Consequently trainings have been organised when and where needed, within resource constraints. The consultancy culture has also removed the urgent need for capacity building within the VAC, perpetuating a lack of capacity.

Three other policies were considered as possibly influenced by VAC outputs. It is important to note that these policies in themselves have not become formal rules shaping VAC behaviour, however. The influence of VAC outputs in the motivation of the development of these policies is questionable, although the use of VAC information to refine these policies is confirmed. These three policies, relating to the development of community assets, disaster risk management, and resilience, all show greater promise of reducing regional vulnerability, with vulnerability understood here as more than just food and nutrition insecurity. Other uses of VAC information that show greater promise of reducing broader regional vulnerability than the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy include: refining existing government policies; informing the development of contextualised ICP, NGO, and government programmes; the identification of beneficiaries for such programmes and other existing national policies; monitoring and evaluation of such programmes and other existing national policies; and the identification of patterns and trends in vulnerability data. Although not mandated, these uses have become accepted rules guiding the usage of vulnerability information. Tendencies to apply VAA for monitoring and evaluation, and trend analysis, emerge as themes from these rules. Both aspects are important to policies most appropriate for complex SESSs, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis, as they are better equipped to deal with the uncertainties of vulnerability assessments.

Two other emerging rules of the VAC policy arrangement showing promise for reducing regional vulnerability include its self-regulatory nature and some members' commitment to the work and to reducing regional vulnerability. The former is a by-product of the multi-agency nature of the VAC, as a combination of different actors with different mandates would check up on each other and prevent behaviour that deviates from the overarching goal. Examples include a capacity review in 2012, strategically positioned to re-emphasise the importance of the involvement of development partners, critical responses, and a loss of perceived credibility of an NVAC misrepresenting an emergency situation. The latter rule, namely the commitment of some VAC members to the work and to reducing regional vulnerability, became apparent as so many NVACs are unformalised and government officials contributing to VAC outputs thus do so voluntarily without payment. Although I am not advocating that more members should work without payment, the commitment of these members drives the process and it would be wise to determine future members' commitment as part of selecting them, rather than merely including them in the policy arrangement as a result of their position within government.

In conclusion, rules that might block the transferral of knowledge to policy processes by keeping research and policy processes separate include institutionalisation, a consultancy culture, and an informal understanding that VAC work stops as soon as the emergency food insecurity information has been produced. A lack of engagement with policy makers and limited efforts to translate VAC information into user-friendly formats keep VAC outputs from informing policy processes. A narrow understanding of vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity has also been institutionalised in formal research frameworks, perpetuating a narrow food security focus. This understanding has influenced the formation of one relevant policy, yet may only have limited effects on reducing overall regional vulnerability. VAC information has mostly indirectly influenced policy outputs, and catalysts in this process have included the applicability of VAC information towards the formation of contextualised programmes, monitoring and evaluation processes, the identification of beneficiaries, and trend analysis. These catalysts are critically important and should be supported if the VAC intends to fulfil its documented mandate. Although not directly influencing the policy process, the VAC's self-regulatory nature and some members' commitment to the work should be encouraged and preserved, as these aspects are essential for dealing with the uncertainty in VAA.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this final chapter is to answer the research question: *What are the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policy processes that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?* I draw out key arguments from the discussions in previous chapters to answer this question. The main points of each chapter are not re-argued; instead, related sections are indicated in brackets where relevant.

In combination with the limitations of the study, I offer lessons learned during the research process as a potential practical contribution to the field of study related to research to policy transfer in developing countries. This chapter also contains a set of recommendations for improving the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC's) operations towards a reduction in regional vulnerability in the complex southern African Socio-ecological System (SES). I conclude the chapter by revisiting the original scientific contributions of this research and outline key areas for future studies.

8.2 Answering the research question

This section unpacks the research question and some key definitions before briefly summarising the case study and its formation to address complex challenges within southern Africa. Complexity is applied to conceptualise the research field and question elements as they relate to the case study. Starting with the identification of four related policy outputs⁴⁸, I retrospectively trace the institutional dynamics within the four dimensions of the policy arrangement in the relevant countries. Presenting the findings in this manner conveniently organises insights to answer the research question. Both policies and programmes informed by research outputs are also linked back to discussions about best-suited policies to address system vulnerability and key policy entry points (1.4.4), as well as the use of research in policy processes (1.4.5). Where relevant, contextual drivers are identified. To avoid the misinterpretation of the implications of the research findings, the next section revisits the limitations of the study and some lessons learned during the process.

8.2.1 Lessons learned and the limitations of this study

Although already discussed in 3.6, a short overview of the limitations of the study is presented here against the backdrop of the lessons I learned doing qualitative research about institutional dynamics shaping policy processes in developing countries. As one examiner of this thesis stated: "...the greatest risk to science is that what is captured and documented and turned into accepted narratives of reality is based only on what is easy to measure; not necessarily on what or who has the greatest impact on human development". Sharing my lessons as a researcher attempting to understand how people use research to shape policy outputs in a developing country context, may offer some practical value.

⁴⁸ The Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy, the Zimbabwean Productive Community Work Policy, the Malawian Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, and the Malawian Resilience Policy.

The VAC system has no central databank that stores VAC-related information such as individual member names, contact information or VAC documents. I relied on an older version of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) website to access some key documents for a review, and on key individuals in each of the investigated National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NVACs) to connect me to the rest of the network. I was often dependent on the courtesy and thus choices of a staff member within an NVAC. Although not intentionally planned, having an already established NVAC member communicate the intentions of the study to the rest of the NVAC before entering the member state for interviews seemed to increase the perceived credibility of the research. The letter from the Regional Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme Management Unit (PMU) was also distributed to the entire network and most interviewees referred to it when first introduced to me. Some interviewees also mentioned that due to a lack of a central VAC repository, except for hard copies of some reports circulating between users, a significant amount of documents created by the VAC only existed on the computers of those who wrote and edited them. I was able to obtain some of these documents, yet many were duplications of what already existed on the old SADC website.

Due to short research visits, I could not thoroughly engage with the intricacies of the different SADC member states I visited. It is important to note that the sampling of NVACs for the case study was never intended to be a representative sample of the VAC system, but offered entry points and valuable insights to the larger system. It would have produced richer data if I were able to visit all the NVACs, yet time and resource constraints prevented me from doing so.

I did not use a set of indicators or analysed actual policy documents to determine which policies were influenced by VAC research. I also did not attempt to determine if any policies had actually reduced vulnerability in southern Africa, as establishing a clear deterministic link between policies and outcomes would be near impossible. Instead I chose to listen to VAC members and their interpretation of the use of research in policy processes, and how this research to policy transfer was influencing regional vulnerability. Doing this meant risking missing some policies and including others in which VAC influence could be argued ambiguous when analysing the actual policy documents.

The reason for making this choice was because of the study's focus on institutional aspects, which meant focusing more on people's understanding of research to policy transfer and the reduction of vulnerability, as well as how this transfer is embedded in networks, than the 'hard' evidence of this transfer. It also allowed me to better understand how research shaped policy processes, even though the actual research outputs may not be reflected in the final policy document. Through this process four policies were identified. Only one had been finalised by the time of the research: the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy. A thorough analysis of this one existing policy could have added to a comparison of the VAC's understanding of its research outputs on the policy, and what was actually reflected in the policy document. Even so, the ways in which VAC outputs have shaped this Zimbabwean policy would not necessarily feature as hard evidence referenced in the policy document. Nevertheless, it is important to take this research approach into consideration when reflecting on the findings reported in this chapter.

Other research-related challenges included that I had limited time with some interviewees, as they had other responsibilities or were travelling. The language barrier in Mozambique confused interview appointments and complicated the actual interviews. I had to replace the NetMap process with Liefferink's power chart to identify and map key stakeholders due to a lack of engagement and resource constraints. The participation in the development of the power chart was poor. As very few VAC documents were publically available, I was also not able to conduct a comprehensive financial analysis of VAC resource flows, mapped against its mandate.

Through the engagement with the VAC I met members who seemed thoroughly engaged with the endeavour to reduce regional vulnerability and who have dedicated their lives to this work. Many appeared disillusioned with the processes and people that did not seem to be contributing to sustainable solutions. These individuals were often more critical of VAC operations. It seemed as if VAC outputs ended short of innovations, due to the fact that the VAC system required research about challenges and not solutions to these challenges. People seemed mostly interested in measuring tools that were user-friendly and that could produce trustworthy research outputs.

I believe that the organic nature of the research process, which was always transparent and included feedback from VAC members wherever possible, increased the legitimacy of the findings. The questions I asked during interviews sparked interest in at least some respondents. I've received a number of e-mails requesting literature on the application of research in policy, vulnerability as a broader concept, and specifically literature on measuring vulnerability. The research thus helped build awareness of and sparked reflection on the application of research not only in the development of policies, but also for use in designing research to inform policies.

8.2.2 The research question unpacked

The research question concerns vulnerability research outputs, its use in national policy processes in southern Africa, and a reduction in regional vulnerability as an outcome of the research to policy transfer. Outputs and outcomes differ; outputs being actual concrete products delivered, such as research reports or policy or programme documents, and outcomes referring to the difference or change created as a result of an output, for example the reduction of vulnerability or a dependency on foreign aid. The research question assumes that the use of vulnerability research in policy processes would better contextualise policies. It also assumes that better contextualised policies would be more effective in reducing regional vulnerability, while acknowledging that research is not the only form of knowledge that could inform policy processes.

8.2.3 Key definitions in the research question

Vulnerability, research, and policy processes are terms supposing specific definitions within the context of this research. Vulnerability is a system property that is exposed by shocks. It is one of the manifestations of general processes of system responses to changes in the relationship between open dynamic systems and their contexts. Different elements in the system can be vulnerable to a variety of external elements. In the case of the southern African system, a drought or a food price hike could for example expose the vulnerability of parts of the southern African population to food and nutrition insecurity. A vulnerable system

is unable to resist or adapt to contextual changes, although its vulnerability provides an opportunity for systemic change by identifying systematic entry points for resilience building. By identifying that some people are food insecure, an entry point to address food insecurity is presented. Research processes in the context of this thesis include systematic efforts made towards gaining greater insight and knowledge into the drivers of vulnerability and shocks leading to vulnerability in southern Africa, whether quantitative or qualitative in nature; efforts towards understanding the system properties that support or prevent people from resisting or adapting to change. Research could thus provide a better understanding of the causes and drivers of food insecurity to better position interventions to address this issue. Policy processes include systematic efforts such as problem identification, agenda setting, policy writing, implementation, and evaluation, made towards developing a policy document. A policy would ideally guide interventions to address a problem such as food and nutrition insecurity.

An institutional approach was justified as appropriate to answer the research question, as it could accommodate policy processes as an emergence of a complex SES and maintain a focus on power dynamics between the agents responsible for shaping policy outcomes. Blockages and catalysts in the research question thus refer specifically to institutional dynamics preventing or supporting the transfer of researched knowledge to policy processes. The transfer of research to policy is not exclusive to referenced research findings in policy documents (linear models), but includes changes in the discourses between those responsible for policy development (relationship models), and how the research is integrated, translated and mobilised within policy networks, whether to inform future research directions or be applied politically (systems models)(1.4.5). This study focused more on why and some research outputs have emerged as new ideas in the VAC, than what to transfer from research to policy.

8.2.4 The VAC case study

The answer contained in this section relates to the SADC VAC (1.2, 3.4.1, 4.3.1 and 4.3.1). The VAC was chosen as an appropriate case study to identify catalysts for and blockages to the usage of vulnerability research in southern African policy processes, as its documented mandate states that it: "...will work to strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems in order to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions that will lead to a reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region". The SADC VAC offered a unique empirical account of the issues surrounding the use of research in policy processes in a challenging field: vulnerability in complex socio-ecological systems.

The SADC VAC sits within the SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR). The VAC's boundaries include the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and NVACs, which in turn each consist of regional and national governing bodies, as well as International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) active in each member state. The VAC was formed in 1999 to provide a consensual information platform for humanitarian partners working to address food security emergencies in the region at the time, but has since broadened its discursive focus to include chronic food security. The context of the VAC includes influences that manifest in the southern African region, whether originating from inside or outside the region (3.4.1).

Contextual factors that motivated the formation of the VAC included complex food security emergencies in the 1990s and early 2000s, other compounded emergencies such as droughts, floods, and disease outbreaks, regional and national parallel multi-sectoral governing structures that worked separately and consequently challenged cooperation and consensus in humanitarian response, and a lack of specific information about who was impacted by food shortages (4.3.1). To address these challenges, the VAC governance structure emerged.

Governance refers to the changing nature of policy processes that is sensitive to the involvement of ever-increasing variety of terrains and actors beyond the central government (2.3). For governance to be successful, a shadow of hierarchy is necessary, which is sometimes provided by states, yet could also be provided by other actors such as companies and international organisations in areas of limited statehood (2.3).

8.2.5 Complexity conceptualisations and the policy arrangement approach

Complexity theory is applied metaphorically (1.4.1). Except for supporting an interrogation of the complex research field, the theory also accommodates a conceptual link between the complex research field, the VAC case study, research- and policy processes, and the notion of vulnerability.

Applying complexity theory, southern Africa was thus conceptualised as a complex SES (1.4.2). The southern African SES in turn has a number of subsystems, including a governing subsystem. The southern African governing subsystem includes ICPs, the regional SADC body, and national governments. The VAC forms part of this governing subsystem as an information unit, providing vulnerability information to governing bodies. The VAC draws information about the vulnerability dynamics of the southern African population from the SES to present to these governing bodies. The governing bodies then choose whether and how to apply the information to address vulnerability in the SES (1.4.2), but the operations of these bodies could also be changed by research outputs. The flow of information through the VAC thus also affects its internal discourses and operations. The VAC could have been conceptualised as a knowledge arrangement, but due to the nature of the research question and the VAC's documented mandate, which states that it should inform policy formulation, the VAC was conceptualised as a policy arrangement. Drawing on the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) (1.5 and 2.4), a policy arrangement consists of four dimensions: discourses, actors and coalitions, power and resources, and institutional rules. The PAA was applied to interrogate the institutional dynamics shaping the transfer of knowledge to policy processes.

8.2.6 Four policy outputs

The VAC does not have a record of policies it has intentionally inspired or crafted. Nevertheless, interviewees reported at least four policies that they perceived as having been influenced by Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) outputs. Only one, the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy seemed truly embedded and thus emerging from an NVAC. For the other three, policy makers used VAA information to refine or better contextualise the policies: the Zimbabwean Productive Community Work Policy, the Malawian Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and the Malawian Resilience Policy. The first policy maintains a food and nutrition security interpretation of vulnerability. The other three policies concern

community asset development, disaster risk management and resilience building. The VAC has not attempted a study to assess the influence of these four policies on regional vulnerability.

Based on interviewees' reflections, these policies were designed or being developed to address specific problems identified at specific points in time. There were also discussions about the challenging long timeframes of getting these policies finalised and implemented, as they were going through different government channels. Each policy was also reported to be the responsibility of a very specific department within government. Except for the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy, the people who spoke about these policies were not directly involved in their development, but knew someone who was working on the policy or heard of the policy from someone within government. Reflecting on the discussion about policies best suited to address vulnerability, these four policies, as described by interviews, do not seem to reflect the characteristics required to deal with the uncertainty of complex challenges in southern Africa (1.4.3). This can't be said with certainty, however, as the one policy that existed at the time of the research was not analysed, and the rest had not yet been approved. The use of VAA information to formulate and refine policies may however be evidence of an attempt to better contextualise policies.

Again, based on what interviewees said, and drawing on the discussion about key entry points for policies to address vulnerability (1.4.3), it would seem that the Zimbabwean policies, although not suited to address vulnerability, are nevertheless working on system properties, addressing sensitivity to food and nutrition insecurity, and building capacity through infrastructure development pre-exposure (7.3.2). The Malawian policies are also focused on system changes yet seem to also reflect more deliberately on external processes or disasters more typically associated with vulnerability that is broader than only food security. These policies also seem to be focused on system changes pre-exposure. With some changes these policies could begin to address regional vulnerability. A key requirement would be transparent evaluation and monitoring systems, not only of the efficacy of policies, but also of contextual changes. Policies need to be much more flexible in order to adapt to changing contexts. Consequently the budgeting and capacity structures supporting policies would also need to be flexible.

Although this study may have missed some key policy outputs, these four policies were the only ones identified between the five investigated NVACs. The policies are also linked to only two NVACs, which interviewed VAC members considered the strongest NVACs in the system. According to interviewees, the strongest two NVACs have thus only been able to influence four policies in the 15 years since the VAC's inception. For an organisation mandated to inform policy, these outputs seem limited. Turning to insights that emerged through the application of the PAA, it is possible to suggest some of the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of VAA in policy processes in southern Africa.

8.2.7 Catalysts

Catalysts for transferring vulnerability information to policy processes could not readily be assessed, as the actual policies were not analysed. Instead, insights that emerged by applying the PAA to the VAC suggest some catalysts. As the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy is the only policy interviewees identified as clearly embedded within an NVAC, suggestions for catalysts for transferring VAC research to

policy are drawn specifically from interviews in which this policy was mentioned. This list of catalysts for research-policy transfer within the VAC is thus not exclusive.

As the most-often quoted successful policy influenced by VAA, the data on this policy offered valuable insights into the processes that led to its development. VAC members consider the Zimbabwean Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) as the most successful NVAC within the VAC policy arrangement (6.8), partly because of its accumulated capacity with regards to often-neglected assessments such as nutrition and urban assessments (7.3.1), but also because of the unambiguous Food and Nutrition Security Policy output (7.3.2). The Food and Nutrition Security Policy is an output of the Food and Nutrition Council (FNC) structure, housing the ZimVAC and situated under the Presidency in the Zimbabwean government. Policy and research are thus integrated under one institutional structure (7.3.2). The RVAA PMU is a strong supporter of the ZimVAC in terms of financial and technical assistance, significantly subsidising the ZimVAC's capacity to conduct VAA (6.6.2). The ZimVAC has been the only NVAC to deliberately translate VAA information into an accessible form (PowerPoint presentation) for policy makers to assist them with interpreting food security data. Notably, however, translating information into accessible forms only emerged after the development of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (7.3.2). Nevertheless, the initiative could have been a product of deliberate engagements with policy makers. Under the presidency, the formation of the policy would also have benefited from high-level political support. The FNC has coordinating power over government structures concerned with food and nutrition-related issues.

Identified catalysts for translating VAA into policy, or at least for inspiring policy outputs, thus include:

- Sufficient capacity and funding;
- Technical assistance;
- An institutional structure that integrates research and policy processes;
- Strategic engagements with policy makers;
- The translation of research into policy-friendly formats; and
- High-level political support.

It must be noted here that the integration of policy and research within one institutional structure is not always desirable. As explored in the thesis introduction in the section on boundary management (1.4.4), the process of research needs to produce salient, credible, and legitimate information untainted by political interference, yet the application of this research is also important and requires a variety of institutional mechanisms that facilitate communication, translation, and mediation across boundaries. A configuration such as the VAC is thus more appropriate to house both processes than a governmental institutional structure such as the FNC. It is also interesting to note that many of these catalysts are used as motivations for the process of formalising NVACs within their respective governments, yet as explored in the sections related to blockages, successful institutionalisation comes with certain unwanted consequences that have resulted in blockages (7.3.2).

Although the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy was useful for identifying catalysts in research to policy transfer, it is important to note that this policy remains focused on food and nutrition security

(denying broader vulnerability issues), and represents a government policy unlikely to adapt to complex contextual changes. The type of research that has dominated within the VAC, concerned mostly with food and nutrition security, thus also shaped the ZimVAC focus and operations.

8.2.8 Blockages

The limited amount of policy outputs suggested more institutional blockages than catalysts to the process of transferring research to policy processes, or at least inspiring policy development. The application of the PAA to the VAC suggested blockages that were not only the inverse of the catalyst suggestions above, but additional blockages were identified.

a) An exclusive focus on emergency food and nutrition assessments

The first set of suggested blockages emerged out of the VAC actors' understanding of the purpose of the committee. Although the documented mandate is clear that the VAC is to strengthen vulnerability analysis to inform policy formulation, programming, and emergency interventions to reduce regional vulnerability, the VAC has mainly been focused on producing food and nutrition security-related information for use by ICPs in their emergency aid interventions and development programmes. Emergency aid responses represent shielding activities during exposure as an entry point to address vulnerability (1.4.3). Development programmes may either represent initiatives focused on system changes pre-exposure or compensation activities post-exposure, yet international agencies tend to only get involved once shocks have exposed vulnerabilities and thus these programmes tend to be post-exposure (1.4.3 and 5.3.1). Although international efforts should not be underestimated for addressing regional emergencies and potentially also vulnerability, as well as providing a shadow of hierarchy in areas of limited statehood (2.3), this research focused specifically on the use of vulnerability information in policy processes, which arguably are better positioned to give rise to long-term system capacity building, prevention and mitigation activities, as well as restoration and adaptation initiatives (1.4.3).

Contextual food security emergencies and other compounded crises at the inception of the VAC helped shape the emergency perception around the purpose of the VAC (4.3.1). A strong international food security discourse translated into regional programmes such as the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), SADC Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), SADC CAADP Framework for African Food Security (FAFS), the United Kingdom's (UK's) Department for International Development's (DfID's) Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP) and Food Security Information and Vulnerability Mapping System (FIVIMS) in South Africa, and consequently helped shape the VAC vulnerability discourse as vulnerability to food insecurity (4.3.2 and 5.3). The VAC and RVAA programme's placement under FANR is part of agricultural information under food security, which relates to the structural power that would also influence its vulnerability discourse, to interpret vulnerability as vulnerability to food insecurity (6.3). This vulnerability discourse has been institutionalised through two frameworks in particular: the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Household Economy Approach (HEA) (7.3.1). Although the latter uses a livelihood approach, food security is still centrally placed in assessments. The IPC initially only measured acute food insecurity, but has recently also included a chronic assessment. Although both frameworks have been revised to incorporate assessments of

chronic issues, both still strongly focuses on food security (6.4). The VAC has not yet fully realised the potential of applying both these frameworks to complement each other. An informal training network within the VAC has also created a dependency on external consultants, which has limited capacity strengthening within the VACs to be able to develop a standardised integrated framework to apply across the region (7.3.3). If new frameworks are to enter the VAC policy arrangement, it will most likely come through ICPs and funders with the necessary technical support.

b) A lack of concerted dissemination efforts to actors beyond the VAC

As emergency food insecurity information was requested or even demanded by ICPs, the VAC consequently did not need to make concerted efforts to disseminate information beyond VAC boundaries. Since its inception, annual dissemination events have included only VAC members, selected due to their high political ranking, and not because of their involvement with policy processes (7.3.1). The VAC has also not translated VAA information into user-friendly formats for use by policy makers, except for the ZimVAC's recent reports in PowerPoint format (7.3.1 and 7.3.2). Similarly, there have been no dedicated events targeting policy makers and accommodating policy dialogue. Although some VAC documents were available on the RVAA programme for the document analysis, the VAC does not have an accessible database containing all its regional and national reports.

c) The formalisation of NVACs within under-capacitated government structures

A second set of blockages relates to the process of formalising NVACs within their respective governments, driven by the RVAA PMU. VAC members generally support the process, because it is assumed that formalising NVACs within government structures influences national policy processes. The VAC's lack of appreciation for the challenges already faced by policy makers in national policy processes has resulted in a large degree of the policy-related responsibilities of the VAC being moved onto already struggling national policy processes. In one interview, a respondent commented that the establishment of an NVAC would help resolve national policy process challenges, yet this is unlikely without a strategic effort on the RVAA PMU's part. Limited policy outputs have also been evidence of weak national policy processes.

d) Unbalanced power resulting in unequal resource distribution, politicised research, exclusion of ICPs, and stunted discursive shifts

The formalisation process is not standardised, and the PMU has the power to allocate resources and technical assistance to NVACs as it deems appropriate. The NVACs that have been fully institutionalised seem to receive greater inputs from the PMU than those that have not, further supporting the perception that institutionalised NVACs are more successful. Another motivation of the institutionalisation process was that it would increase funding from national governments, but this has not been the case. NVACs continue to rely on funding from DfID, allocated through the RVAA PMU. The PMU has replaced the RVAC as the entity within the VAC that offers strategic direction, resources, and technical support. The PMU answers directly to the international funder DfID and as such bypasses accountability within regional SADC structures.

DfID's reasoning for funding the RVAA programme might have been the lack of power within SADC structures (6.6). This lack of regional power and consequently channels of accountability may also have

emphasised the need for formalising NVACs in southern African government structures. It may be that the RVAA programme assumed that government structures would increase accountability within the VAC. Reflecting on the discussion around areas of limited statehood (2.3), it is important to note here that SADC cannot provide a shadow of hierarchy, and instead of allowing ICPs to increase their 'shadow', VAC funders are determined to re-embed the VAC within regional governments. This may be a sensible move if governments were in control of all the areas in their countries, but none of the five investigated NVAC states can claim full statehood.

The formalisation process has also had other unintended consequences. Although the VAC was conceived as a multi-agency organisation (arguably a governance structure), which offered members equal vetting power, formalising NVACs within national governments has increased national governments' power and reduced that of ICPs. Once an NVAC is fully institutionalised, the national government needs to sign off on vulnerability information before it is released. Ruling parties in member states have recognised the value of controlling this information and have manipulated VAA information for political reasons. These ruling parties have inflated food insecurity statistics to increase the apparent need for international funding; deflated the statistics before elections to appear competent at handling food insecurity; and applied the statistics to target the most vulnerable communities, who would be more susceptible to political campaigns than less vulnerable groups (6.9 and 7.3.2). The politicisation of food security information has decreased its perceived credibility. Politicisation is not necessarily a threat, as it can also support the transfer of knowledge to policy processes in order to solve problems. The issue, however, is political processes that are not transparent.

Increasing governments' power has also resulted in the exclusion of ICPs from VAA work in one country. As expressed earlier, the current support of ICPs in the region is crucial in dealing with vulnerability. By excluding ICPs from vulnerability assessments through process of politicisation, the VAC (or governments within the VAC) would be contributing to regional vulnerability.

The formalisation process thus creates conflicting dynamics for the VAC on the government-governance continuum. Although the VAC seemed to have emerged as a governance structure to deal with the uncertainties of complex regional challenges, its mandate and internal evolution has forced it back into a government mode of governing. This is not to say that governing by governments is 'wrong', but the politicisation of food insecurity information, the exclusion of ICPs, and the stunting of discursive shifts (as discussed below) is undesirable if the aim is to reduce general regional vulnerability.

As a result of increased government power within the VAC, the discursive shift from vulnerability as emergency food insecurity to broader conceptualisations of vulnerability and resilience has been stunted. Since the inception of the VAC, international resilience discourse has emerged yet has not been fully translated into local VAC operations. The international climate change discourse, strongly linked to the resilience discourse, has recently been incorporated into the third phase of the RVAA programme, although no concrete manifestations of this discourse have appeared in VAC assessments. Although some interviewees referred to the importance of reducing not only acute but also chronic vulnerability, and in some cases even mentioned increasing resilience, most of these discussions were rooted in the understanding

that vulnerability referred to vulnerability to food insecurity. The initial framing of food insecurity as vulnerability may also have slowed down the VAC discursive shift to a broader understanding of vulnerability, as the general perception is that the VAC is already addressing vulnerability. Even the food security discourse has developed more rapidly on an international level than it has in the VAC policy arrangement. The VAC continues to prioritise the availability and access dimensions of food security, and to focus assessments in rural areas.

Table 12 summarises the catalysts for and blockages to the uptake of VAC research in policy processes aiming to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa, as well as the contextual drivers and process spin-offs that perpetuate blockages. It thus contains a summarised version of answers presented in 8.2.7 and 8.2.8. The final section of this thesis contains a written summary.

8.2.9 Unplanned outcomes

There have also been a number of outcomes unplanned by the VAC, which shows potential to support future efforts to reduce regional vulnerability. Although challenged by formalisation, the multi-agency nature of the VAC has remained intact. One of the positive spin-offs of the VAC's multi-agency membership has been its self-regulating nature. With a variety of actors each protecting their own mandates under the vulnerability umbrella, the RVAA PMU and ICPs have critiqued governments that have politicised information and excluded ICPs from vulnerability processes. While not completely resolving these issues, the self-regulating nature of the VAC seems to keep the system in check. The continued dependence on external funding and technical support also regulates government power to some degree, reducing the politicisation of research.

Another spin-off of unformalised NVACs has been the filtering of members leading to a handful of people willing to work for the VAC on a voluntary basis. Although VAC members should not work without compensation, a valuable lesson to take away from volunteerism is that a clearly specified member profile and well-defined skill requirements may greatly improve productivity within the VAC.

8.3 Recommendations

Food and nutrition insecurity issues remain an important contextual challenge within southern Africa. Consequently, recommending that the VAC needs to broaden its interpretation of vulnerability to incorporate international resilience discourses may not be considered an urgent priority. With limited capacity and resources, the VAC may well choose to focus on food security, which is an immediate problem threatening the survival of the regional population. As some actors and power relationships have benefited from the way the VAC is currently structured and operating, implementing a broader mandate may be resisted. To be sustainable, change would need to emerge from the VAC system. The need for change will also only be recognised if problematic areas are exposed from within the VAC.

Although a key recommendation could have been to conduct a vulnerability trend analysis of all available VAA reports to assess whether VAC work has had any effect on regional vulnerability, the Holloway et al. (2013) study indicated that a retrospective trend analysis was not possible. Differing frameworks, methods,

Table 12: Catalysts, blockages, and the contextual drivers and process spin-offs that perpetuate the blockages to the uptake of VAC research in vulnerability-reducing policy processes in southern Africa

	Catalysts (see 8.2.7)	Blockages (see 8.2.8)	Social and ecological contextual drivers and process spin-offs perpetuating blockages (see 8.2.8)
In research processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient NVAC capacity - Sufficient funding - The translation of research outputs into consumer-friendly formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research aimed exclusively at informing short-term emergency interventions - A lack of internal VAC capacity to broaden research beyond emergency food security - A lack of research dissemination strategies to actors outside the VAC - A lack of efforts to develop consumer-friendly research reports - Politicised research outputs and the co-option of VAA research for political purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persisting food and nutrition security emergencies - Institutionalised research frameworks with narrowed food and nutrition security focus - Lack of increased government funding for VAC work - A consultancy dependency culture within the VAC that maintains low internal capacity - A lack of monitoring and evaluation systems - A lack of configurations to deal with uncertainty
In policy processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-level political support for VAC work and the formulation of policy - Institutional structures with coordinating power across stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weak national policy processes - A lack of easy access to VAC outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lack of efforts and strategies to address weak national policy processes
In research and policy processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The integration of research and policy processes within one configuration - Purposeful engagements between researchers and policy makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parallel-operating research and policy processes - A lack of purposeful engagements between researchers and policy makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lack of standard VAC procedures - A lack of power within SADC structures to mandate vulnerability reduction policies and programmes (6.6) - Stunted discursive shifts

and formats of data generated by different NVACs across the region would not allow it. Again, the inability to synthesise existing data into a trend analysis highlights the importance of creating comparable vulnerability outputs across the region. Furthermore, in evaluation methodologies the demonstration of the effectiveness of policy is rare, because of the issue of causality. It is difficult to prove that it was indeed a policy that influenced a specific outcome. Instead of a vulnerability trend analysis, the VAC should conduct a similar consultation process as the one in 2004, taking stock of developments in the last decade. The VAC should undertake a critical analysis of the RVAA programme outputs against the VAC mandate.

The RVAC should then commission an event for VAC members to critically reflect on the findings of this analysis. These findings should be juxtaposed with discourses around the VAC's understanding of vulnerability and its purpose, possibly as discussed in this thesis. After critical engagements with the outcomes of the VAC review and reflections on the current VAC vulnerability discourse, the mandate should be assessed and refined or reformed if no longer relevant. Although the urgency of the matter should be emphasised, the process should not be rushed just for the sake of having a mandate. A reformed mandate should not be compiled by stringing popular international and local discourses together, but should be based on critical considerations of real challenges faced by the region, as reflected in the output analysis. Full consensus should be reached on the new mandate. The option for future critical reflection and reconsideration of the mandate, or complete adaptation of the mandate to address future regional challenges, should be inherent to a new formulation of the mandate. Similar to policies best-suited to address vulnerability, the mandate should be adaptable to contextual changes.

Whatever the outcomes of this event (see scenarios below), certain key issues need to be addressed for the future sustainability of the VAC and its effectiveness in the region:

- 1) The VAC should engage with the notions of governance and areas of limited statehood to redefine the role of governments within the VAC. In countries where governments are able to provide a shadow of hierarchy, they could possibly operate as facilitators and cooperative partners within the VAC. In countries with larger or a greater number of areas of limited statehood, it would be important to identify if there are alternative structures that could provide a shadow of hierarchy.
- 2) The RVAC should be re-instituted as the governing arm of the VAC, maintaining transparency and accountability within the multi-agency organisation.
- 3) The lack of sanctioning power by the SADC needs to be acknowledged, and alternative accountability mechanisms should be put in place. As self-regulation emerged from the multi-agency membership of the VAC, a single unit within the VAC should not control these mechanisms. Representatives from different VAC agencies should regulate these mechanisms to ensure that funding, training, and technical assistance are aligned with the new consented mandate.
- 4) These processes need to be standardised and better documented for greater transparency and, consequently, accountability.
- 5) The RVAA programme should be reconsidered as the most effective way to fulfil the VAC mandate. If found useful, the RVAA programme should be limited to specific outputs, relevant to the new mandate,

that are delivered within a specific timeframe. Alternatively the next phase of the RVAA programmes should be time-bound and structured within the boundaries of the new mandate.

- 6) Formal and informal rules that have emerged to shape VAC behaviour (possibly as discussed in this research) need to be made explicit and VAC members should interrogate these rules and decide which are most useful to fulfilling the mandate, and which should be abandoned.
- 7) The formalisation process needs to be critically evaluated to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose. This should be done after critical engagement with the notion of governance. As part of an evaluation of the formalisation process, the following points need to be considered:
 - a. If the process is still considered the best way forward, standardised procedures for NVACs wishing to formalise should be drafted, although these procedures should be flexible enough to accommodate different contextual challenges. Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) should be drafted between NVACs and the RVAC, as the RVAC should hold the power to allocate resources and technical assistance towards formalisation.
 - b. The placement of NVACs within governments: Assess whether NVACs should be housed in coordinating structures such as the FNC or the Mozambican Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN), or whether an NVAC should become a unit within an existing department with an existing mandate. If the latter, it would also be important to identify which departments would be more appropriate to house an NVAC. This study found that coordinating structures to deal with complex challenges spanning government sectors were lacking, yet required. The independence of NVACs should remain intact.
- 8) The purpose of each NVAC would need to be aligned to the regional mandate, or the NVAC needs to clearly acknowledge and provide a contextualised motivation for why it has chosen to focus on something else.
- 9) Each NVAC should also draft MoUs with its multi-agency partners, clearly stating the relationship and responsibilities of each member, and preserving the multi-agency nature of the VAC for as long as it is useful to deliver the VAC mandate. It should be emphasised in these MoUs that ICPs and international funders should work with the ultimate aim of becoming superfluous to the VAC. This would require clear exit strategies on the parts of these members, such as funders progressively decreasing funding, forcing governments to increase their budget allocations.
- 10) Before ICPs are able to exit the VAC, strong and transparent monitoring and evaluation systems need to be established to hold records of regional VAA, its applications and implications, for use within the VAC.
- 11) The VAC also urgently requires an easily accessible database or repository of all VAA reports produced under its mandate for use by policy makers or members of the public. As accessible information system, it would function as a governance instrument.
- 12) To build and maintain the necessary capacity in the SADC FANR and member state governments to eventually coordinate the VAC system without international assistance, it is imperative that:
 - a. VAC members are selected according to specific profiles and skill requirements;
 - b. The timeframes of work contracts of governmental VAC members are lengthened; and
 - c. Work contracts clearly stipulate that members would only be able to exit the VAC after training a replacement.

- 13) Issues surrounding the establishment and effective functioning of the regional CoE should urgently be addressed within a specified timeframe, or a new CoE should be chosen. Another alternative would be to institutionalise a working group to design training for specific needs and contexts, yet sufficient funding should then be allocated to such a group to effectively increase capacity building within the VAC.

There are a number of scenarios that could emerge after the completion of the proposed event in which an in-depth analysis of VAC outputs are juxtaposed with the VAC discourses on vulnerability and the purpose of the committee. The changes related to each scenario would need to be implemented over and above the recommendations outlined above. Not all the possible scenarios are discussed here, but the most obvious ones include:

- 1) The VAC's mandate remains firmly focused on immediate availability and access to food.

The VAC would have changed its mandate to only informing food emergency interventions by international partners. It can thus continue with business as usual, but should consider changing its name to the Food Security Assessment Committee. Changing its name and mandate would reduce confusion and unwarranted criticism of VAC outputs. The VAC should also then increase efforts towards institutionalising the first phase of the IPC across the region. This would go far to support regional comparability of food security emergency information. Unplanned outputs, such as the use of this information by others for planning and programming or trend analysis, could then be considered as additional positive spin-offs.

- 2) The focus of the VAC mandate shifts to include long-term food security.

The VAC could also continue with business as usual, but would need to seriously recommit to a long-term approach, which would require concerted efforts towards trend analysis, indicators relating to long-term food security influences (such as urban assessments, nutrition, climate change, ecological degradation, etc.), engaging with policy makers, making contextualised recommendations for both policy and programme developers, translating VAA information into formats that policy makers can effectively engage with, and working to eventually become a superfluous committee, therefore building resilience within communities to independently deal with shocks that threaten community food security. It is also imperative that different parallel operating multi-sectoral structures begin to cooperate on food security. The fourth scenario described below is also relevant for this scenario. Greater funding should be provided to pilot the second phase of the IPC, and the VAC should critically reconsider supporting the HEA and integrating the HEA and IPC as complementary frameworks.

- 3) The VAC mandate's focus shifts to a broader definition of vulnerability, incorporating the international resilience agenda.

The VAC would need to undergo significant institutional changes to accommodate a broader vulnerability focus. Firstly, the VAC would need to agree upon a definition of vulnerability and/or provide the

necessary training to develop an organisational understanding of the global resilience agenda. A thorough analysis of appropriate and existing research frameworks and methods would be required, and trials of potential frameworks should be conducted. These frameworks would need to deliver outputs in line with the new mandate, and thus constantly be adapted and refined to stay relevant. The HEA lends itself to a broader analysis of vulnerability and could thus be a useful stepping-stone in shifting VAC operations to incorporate the global resilience agenda. Although maintaining a food security focus, the HEA's prioritisation of food security may not only be relevant, but imperative in a region that is still challenged by food insecurity. However, food insecurity will be considered as one of many drivers and manifestations of vulnerability. A set of regional vulnerability indicators would enable comparability, although each country would still be able to monitor contextualised indicators only relevant to that country's vulnerability. Similar to a shift in focus to long-term food security, the VAC would need to engage in committed efforts towards vulnerability trend analysis, engagement with policy makers and programme planners, and the presentation of VAA information in user-friendly formats. Although mentioned as part of the general set of recommendations, it would be imperative, if the process of institutionalisation is found to be useful, to formalise NVACs with coordinating power to oversee policies and programmes spanning different governmental sectors. The fourth scenario described below is also relevant for this scenario.

- 4) Any scenarios in which the VAC re-emphasises the policy process for the purpose of reducing regional vulnerability, or vulnerability to food insecurity.

Dombkins (2014) provides a number of characteristics for policies suitable to complex systems (1.4.3). These policies are able to reduce vulnerability within a region if constantly monitored and adapted to contextual changes. They are thus emergent, which means they cannot be predicted or broken down into smaller elements. These policies cannot follow conventional government policy trajectories. Their formulation and implementation are intrinsically linked. One could thus argue that the research and policy processes are not separate, but overlap. Drawing on the notion of boundary management, it is important to keep these processes separate, but for the use of research in policy, institutional mechanisms that facilitate communication, translation and mediation should be created. Boundary objects could include VAA publications, briefs, dialogues and an accessible database. During implementation the potential policy outcomes may change completely, yet can be adapted as they materialise. These policies are constantly monitored and adapted to stay relevant to the system. VAA information produced by the VAC could play a key role in informing policy adaptation to changing contexts. Such policy processes involve multiple actors that cannot be controlled by the person who owns the policy. In the VAC case, although government would own policies, its formation and implementation rely on a variety of VAC actors. Gallopín (2007) gives four strategic entry points for complex policies (1.4.3): a) Working on the system through capacity building activities; b) Working on external processes through prevention and mitigation activities; c) Intervening during the exposure stage through shielding activities; and d) Responding after the exposure, through adaptation, restoration, or compensation activities. To be most effective in meeting a vulnerability-reduction mandate through policy, the VAC system will need to diversify efforts and target all four entry points.

8.4 Scientific contributions

Nowlin (2011) divides policy scholarship between knowledge in policy processes that happens through analysis and evaluation of concerned contexts to inform policy, and knowledge of policy processes that focuses on the how and why of policy processes. Although this work was primarily concerned with the latter, it also provided some insights to the former, due to the VAC case study. The contributions may therefore be useful for policy researchers that focus on the knowledge of policy processes, but also provide insight to policy makers who are interested in knowledge application in policy processes in southern Africa. The scientific contributions of this study included:

- 1) Insights into the multi-level and institutional complexities of policy aspects in responses required to vulnerability and food security in southern Africa: There is a lack of case studies on research to policy transfer in developing countries, and so this work enhances understanding in this field and has identified critical areas for future reflection and research. Although this study generally advocates for a broader vulnerability focus, the immediate concerns around regional food insecurity cannot be ignored. Scenarios 1 and 2 above contain key recommendations for policy processes concerning regional food security. The VAC has not successfully manifested assessments to address or manage vulnerability in the region. One key aspect to vulnerability considerations is climate change. Although emerging in VAC discourses, climate change has not yet been assessed by the VAC. From challenges experienced within the VAC, it should be clear that the use of the term vulnerability relates to international resilience discourse.

Nevertheless, it is possible to integrate food security and vulnerability, either by explaining food security as one manifestation of larger issues of vulnerability, or by bringing the resilience discourse into food security, and working specifically on building resilience within food security. The climate change discourse would similarly need to be defined as one driver of vulnerability, perhaps even resulting in shocks; or specific links between climate change and food security should be outlined and addressed accordingly. Aspects surrounding multi-level and institutional complexities of policies in responses to vulnerability and food security are already challenging. Keeping definitions and understandings of vulnerability and food security clear is imperative to keeping discourses, which inform rules around the application of power and resources to address said issues, well-defined.

- 2) A number of social sciences contributions linked to the application of the PAA:
 - a. The application of the PAA in a new policy field, development policy, and its application in a developing country context: Development policy in developing country contexts differs significantly from environmental policy in developed country contexts. Some of the key insights emerging from this research have been the complex dynamics related to the government-governance continuum, a reliance on international assistance, and weak national policy processes.
 - b. The linkages between the PAA, complexity theory, and Ostrom's SES framework: The SES framework offers a valuable way of conceptualising governing within complex SESs, whilst the PAA offers a way to specifically study policy arrangements in governing systems. Part of this

contribution was the layering of frameworks, as the concept of feedback loops between policy arrangements and the context in which they operate was borrowed from the SES. The research showed how the formation and evolution of the VAC was influenced by contextual factors (see Chapter Four). A future revision of the PAA by its creators could consider including greater focus on dynamics emerging from the ground up, as the framework in its current form does not pay enough attention to emergence from a ground level. The framework acknowledges the importance of such dynamics, but does not offer clear ways of pulling them out.

- 4) The consideration of the role of ICPs in shaping the development policy discourse: ICPs were found to provide a shadow of hierarchy in a number of areas of limited statehood. This research thus suggests that a multi-agency membership to the VAC, which includes ICPs, is necessary until national governments and regional governing structures have gained the required control, capacity and committed sufficient funding towards vulnerability work. Furthermore, ICPs will only be able to exit the VAC once transparent monitoring and evaluations systems have been established to hold records of regional VAA together with its applications and implications.
- 5) Empirical evidence towards the efficacy and challenges of governance in a developing country context: This research could not clearly show that governance structures without governments within a developing country context are more legitimate and responsible than governing by or with governments. When taking the concept of the shadow of hierarchy into account, the VAC presents a complex study. Although the VAC operates in countries with areas of limited statehood, there are no clear alternative structures of hierarchy to support overall governance. Governments' reluctance to include other stakeholders indicates weak states, and the push from DfID to embed NVACs within governments through the RVAA programme hinders alternative hierarchical structures to emerge. ICPs present a shadow of hierarchy to some degree, but obviously focus on specific areas of development and not overall governing. Assessing countries individually and then defining the function of governments within new governance structures in those specific countries would contribute to more effective governing. Nevertheless, ICPs are currently playing a crucial role in dealing with immediate emergencies and managing vulnerability, even if only in the short term.

8.5 Future studies

Throughout this thesis a number of topics for future studies were identified. Some have already been mentioned as part of the recommendations. Other areas include:

- A study of the relationship between the Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU) and the VAC, focusing specifically on the influence of the REWU on the formation of the VAC, how the relationship has evolved, and its implications for regional vulnerability.
- An investigation of the formation and evolution of SETSAN, and its linkages to the VAC system. Operating as coordinating structure, seemingly disengaging from the VAC structure, SETSAN may offer some insights into better integrating various government departments.
- Greater in-depth research into the development of the four policies that have been identified as influenced by VAA information. Although enough data was gathered to make some claims about

these policies, additional research would offer a much richer perspective on the purposeful linkages between VAA information and these policies.

- An assessment of the influence of multi-sectoral administration structures in member states on national and international efforts dealing with the uncertainty of complex problems. This research would further contribute to the body of knowledge on shifting governing structures.

8.6 A final word

Although a rich body of knowledge exists on vulnerability in southern Africa, regional vulnerability persists. This thesis originated in the empirical observation that there was a break between research outputs and policy applications, and consequently set out to answer the following research question: *What are the institutional blockages to and catalysts for the uptake of vulnerability information in national policies that aim to reduce regional vulnerability in southern Africa?* The research set out to determine why some ideas are taken up in policies and policy networks, whilst others are not, rather than how to translate research into policy.

Catalysts were suggested through the application of the PAA. These catalysts relate specifically to the Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Security Policy, as it was the only policy clearly embedded and thus emerging from an NVAC. Suggested catalysts for translating knowledge into policy, and influencing policy processes, included sufficient capacity and funding, technical assistance, an institutional structure that integrates research and policy processes, strategic engagement with policy makers, the translation of research into policy-friendly formats, and high-level political support. As these catalysts only relate to one policy, the list is not exhaustive or representative of the entire VAC system. The process of research needs to produce salient, credible, and legitimate information untainted by political interference, yet the application of this research is also important and requires a variety of institutional mechanisms that facilitate communication, translation, and mediation across boundaries. A configuration such as the VAC thus remains more appropriate than governmental institutional structures to house both research and policy processes.

Blockages to the transfer of knowledge to policy, and the uptake of research in policy processes, were suggested after the application of the PAA. These blockages, as related specifically to research processes, included that: research remained focused on informing short-term emergency interventions; the VAC lacked internal capacity; the arrangement did not develop dissemination strategies to target policy makers; a lack of efforts to develop user-friendly research formats; and politicised research outputs. A focus on policy processes revealed that weak national policy processes, a lack of easy access to VAC research outputs, and a lack of communication between research and policy processes, including a lack of engagement between policy makers, prevented the transfer of information derived from VAA to policy processes.

The research also revealed contextual factors that perpetuated these blockages, including food and nutrition emergencies, a lack of increased government funding for VAC work, a lack of strategies to address weak policy processes in government, and a lack of power within SADC structures. Spin-offs from VAC process that also perpetuated blockages included institutionalised research frameworks with narrowed food and nutrition security focuses, a consultancy culture or dependence on consultants, a lack of configurations to

deal with uncertainty, a lack of evaluation and monitoring systems, a lack of standardised VAC processes, and stunted discursive shifts.

Governance pathways that aim to reduce regional vulnerability should recognise and reflect on policy processes, and consider alternatives. If policy processes continue to be pursued as viable pathways to greater resilience, such policies would need to acknowledge: the character of ecological processes that governance seeks to influence and how these processes interact with and are co-constructed by government; risk and uncertainty, or more broadly, incertitude; and questions around the politics of knowledge. Policies aiming to increase regional resilience need to be designed to respond to complex dynamics emerging from SESs. They would thus need to be emergent as a product of interactions between a range of actors in policy arrangements geared to increase resilience. Governing modes shifting towards governance offers opportunities for a diversity of actors to contribute to policy processes, yet requires a shadow of hierarchy to be successful. None of these governance actors should control the process individually, but should work interdependently to develop mutually beneficial boundary objects to inform policies. Policies could then also become boundary objects. The formulation and implementation of policies must be intrinsically linked. Research and policy processes should be separate processes, but information must be communicated between them. During implementation the potential policy outcomes may change completely, yet with the application of contextualised knowledge, constantly updated through monitoring systems, such policies would be able to adapt as they materialise. Ideally such policies would work on both the system and context of complex SESs, both pre- and post-exposure to shocks. Capacity building activities should focus on the system pre-exposure. The context should also be worked with pre-exposure in the form of prevention and mitigation efforts. Intervening during exposure would include shielding activities, whilst responding after the exposure would include adaptation, restoration, or compensation activities. If applied intentionally, research thus remains a useful tool to better contextualise adaptive policies.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Pages 6 to15 from the 2012 SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Report

SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Synthesis Report - 2012	SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Synthesis Report - 2012
<p>3.0 SUMMARY OF CURRENT HAZARDS AND SHOCKS</p> <p>3.1 Rainfall</p> <p>The 2011/12 rainfall season was generally poor for crop production. Many parts, especially in the southern half of the Region experienced late onset of rains. This was followed by widespread localized prolonged dry spells especially in the second half of the season when most of the crops were at critical development stage. Figure 1 below shows rainfall performance in the two halves of the season. The scale in the map progresses from green to brown representing above normal to below normal rainfall situation respectively, with some of the worst affected areas highlighted with red boundaries. The unfavourable weather conditions resulted in reduction of crop yields in many parts of the Region, thereby putting some households at risk of food insecurity.</p>	<p>Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), SADC continues to be the worst affected in the world.</p> <p>3.4 Access to income</p> <p>Some of the major sources of income in the Region include on and off-farm employment, sale of crops and livestock. Reduced crop production in some parts of the region affected households' access to food and income. For instance, the impact of floods and a dry spell conditions in Mozambique affected crop production and in-turn households' access to food and cash income. Reduced tobacco and cotton production and prices also affected household income in Malawi. Reduced household incomes due to low prices of livestock and lack of access to markets affected household income in some countries such as Namibia and Botswana. Reduced formal and informal employment opportunities were also another contributing factor to reduced household income in some countries in the region such as South Africa and Swaziland</p>
<p>3.2 Livestock diseases</p> <p>Livestock disease incidences continue to affect the significance of livestock as a source of food and income. In the period under review, Botswana reported an outbreak of foot and mouth disease that affected animals especially in Bopirwa and north-western areas of the country. Market restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the disease resulted in negative impact on household incomes especially from livestock.</p>	<p>3.5 Human and animal conflict</p> <p>Human and livestock conflicts were reported in Angola, Botswana and Tanzania and this increased the vulnerability of many households to food insecurity.</p> <p>3.6 Commodity prices</p> <p>Increases in commodity prices in combination with other factors affected a number of countries in the region. Increases in the price of food were recorded in Angola due to reduced crop and livestock production. Prices increases for most commodities and the devaluation of the local currency weakened the coping capabilities of households in Malawi. Food price increases were also reported in Swaziland.</p> <p>3.7 Climate change</p> <p>The SADC policy paper on climate change documents past observed temperature and rainfall changes and assesses policy options for SADC Member States. One important realization is that SADC's vulnerability to climate change is not only caused by climate change but is a combination of social, economic and other environmental factors that interact with climate change. Hence dealing with climate change may also mean addressing non-climatic factors. A number of countries reported an increasing frequency of droughts and dry spells. For example, Botswana, experienced unusual (extremely) high maximum temperatures over south-west and north-western parts of the country exceeding the standing records of temperatures recorded in the past years.</p>

4.0 FOOD SECURITY AND VULNERABILITY SITUATION

4.1 Regional overview

4.1.1 Food production, availability and requirement

SADC recorded a drop of about 7% in cereal production from 33.81 million tonnes in 2011 to 31.47 million tonnes in 2012. However this is still slightly up by 2% compared to the past 5 year average (2007 – 2011) cereal production. Figure 2 shows the cereal production trend in the SADC region from 2007 to 2011.

Figure 2: SADC cereal production trend from 2007 to 2012

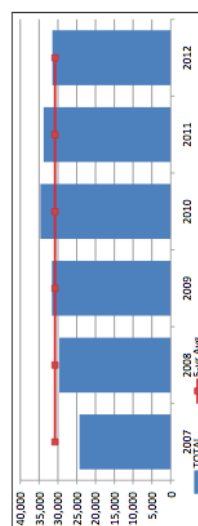


Table 1: SADC cereal crop production 2007-2012

Member States*	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	5-yr Average Harvest (2007-2011)	2012	2012 prodn vs 5-yr Average prodn (%)
Angola	734	756	1,053	1,178	1,410	1,026	876	-15%
Botswana	29	37	42	55	42	41	31	-24%
Lesotho	78	88	86	137	73	92	29	-60%
Malawi	3,616	2,976	3,834	3,572	4,080	3,616	3,799	5%
Mauritius	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0%
Mozambique	2,168	2,284	2,526	2,641	2,935	2,511	1,439	-43%
Namibia	114	121	111	155	117	124	166	34%
RSA	9,292	15,550	14,555	15,122	13,277	13,610	13,194	-3%
Swaziland	47	64	71	75	89	69	76	10%
Tanzania	5,448	5,622	5,265	7,095	6,787	6,043	7,558	25%
Zambia	1,537	1,452	2,182	3,078	3,346	2,319	3,185	37%
Zimbabwe	1,200	660	1,561	1,534	1,652	1,321	1,120	-15%
TOTAL	24,666	29,611	34,643	33,075	30,637	30,637	31,474	2%

*Excludes DRC, Madagascar and Seychelles which have not yet established National Early Warning Units
Source: Member States and SADC Secretariat

Many countries (ten of twelve countries with data) have recorded decreases in cereal production in 2012, ranging from 1% in South Africa to as high as 60% in Lesotho when compared to cereal production in 2011. Only Namibia and Tanzania had increased harvest in 2012 compared to 2011. Table 1 shows cereal production figures by country from 2007 to 2012 and a comparison of 2012 cereal production with 2011 and the past 5 year average cereal production.

The poor crop production performance in many Member States in the 2011/12 agricultural season has seen the Region experiencing a cereal deficit of about 5.55 million tonnes in the 2012/13 marketing year compared to a cereal deficit of 0.21 million tonnes in 2011/12 marketing year. All Member States except Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia recorded overall cereal deficits. Zambia recorded a cereal surplus of 1.11 million tonnes followed by Malawi with 0.56 million tonnes and Tanzania with 0.19 million tonnes. For the first time since 2006/07 marketing year, the Region has recorded a maize deficit, assessed at 0.64 million tonnes, as regional availability of 28.86 million tonnes fall short of regional requirement of 29.49 million tonnes. The current deficit is significantly the opposite of a maize surplus of 3.41 million tonnes recorded during 2011/12 marketing year. All countries have recorded maize deficits in 2012/13 marketing year except Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. The Region also registered regional deficits in the other main cereal crops of wheat, rice, sorghum and millet as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: SADC – Summary cereal balance sheet

Item	QUANTITY (1000 metric tonnes)					
	Maize	Wheat	Rice	Millet/ Sorghum cereals	All Sorghum cereals	
A. Domestic Availability	2752	111	193	451	339	
B. Gross Domestic Requirements	2752	861	535	214	4286	
C. Desired SGR Carryover Stocks	2652	863	482	81	4028	
D. Domestic Shortfall/ Surplus	102	0	52	51	205	
	On Farm	0	0	1	2	
	Other	0	0	0	0	
A. 2 Gross Harvest	26101	2048	1398	1927	31474	
B. Gross Domestic Requirements	27011	5031	2755	3076	37803	
C. Desired SGR Carryover Stocks	2481	869	14	77	3442	
D. Domestic Shortfall/ Surplus	-637	-2979	-637	-1092	-5545	

Apart from cereals, livestock and livestock products play a significant role in ensuring food security of the population in the Region.

Table 3: Production of livestock products in SADC from 2006 to 2011

Livestock Product	2006					2007					2008					2009					2010					2011				
	Production	Stock	Meat	Milk	Wool	Production	Stock	Meat	Milk	Wool	Production	Stock	Meat	Milk	Wool	Production	Stock	Meat	Milk	Wool	Production	Stock	Meat	Milk	Wool	Production	Stock	Meat	Milk	Wool
Beef	1.28	0.14	0.15	0.19	0.16	1.33	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.154	1.39	0.16	0.17	0.154	0.17	1.51	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.15	1.57	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.15	1.57	0.17	0.18	0.17	13%
Goat meat	0.14	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.154	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.154	0.17	0.16	0.17	0.154	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.154	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.154	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.154	0.17	0.18	10%
Pork	1.32	1.36	1.4	1.41	1.42	1.36	1.4	1.41	1.42	1.38	1.4	1.41	1.42	1.38	1.4	1.41	1.42	1.38	1.4	1.41	1.42	1.38	1.4	1.41	1.42	1.38	1.4	1.41	1.42	4%
Milk	4.44	4.55	4.65	4.75	4.85	4.55	4.65	4.75	4.85	4.95	4.65	4.75	4.85	4.95	5.05	4.75	4.85	4.95	5.05	5.15	4.85	4.95	5.05	5.15	4.85	4.95	5.05	5.15	4%	
Wool	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.59	0.61	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.61	0.63	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.61	0.63	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.61	0.63	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.61	0.63	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.61	10%
Goat meat	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.25	11%
Sheep meat	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	2%

Source: SADC Member States

Table 3 shows the production of livestock products in SADC from 2006 to 2011. The production of meat has increased by about 3.0% from 5.34 million tonnes in 2010 to 5.5 million tonnes in 2011.

Milk and eggs production have increased by 2.2% and 3.2% from 4.86 million tonnes and 0.63 million tonnes to 4.97 million and 0.65 million tonnes respectively over the same period. However, the Region still remains a net importer of these products.

4.2 Results of VAA Assessments

4.2.1 Methodologies used in VAA for 2011/2012

Most of the Member States used the Household Economy Approach (HEA) to assess the number of food insecure households. The HEA uses livelihoods based analysis to determine the number of households which are food insecure. This approach acknowledges that food security is not just about cereal production nor own crop production but that there are a wide range of foods including non cereal crops, livestock products, fishery etc and also recognises that there are other means of accessing food other than own production and these include purchases, gifts, barter etc. In summary, the approach looks at food security in a holistic manner.

Many countries that have a National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NVAC) have established baseline information which among other things shows the amount of kilocalories the population is able to obtain from the different food sources at their disposal. The minimum food energy requirement for a household to survive and be active is 2100 kcal per person per day. Normally households are expected to meet at least 90% of the minimum energy requirement; otherwise they would not be able to survive. Every year the NVACs identify areas where there have been hazards/shocks or events e.g. floods, droughts, food price increases etc that are likely to negatively affect the ability of households to meet the minimum energy requirement. Vulnerability assessments are conducted in the identified areas to determine whether households will be able to meet their minimum energy requirements or not. Those households that are unable to meet this minimum threshold after taking into account all their sources of food including some coping strategies are considered to be food insecure. Some of the Member States have advanced on this analysis and are able to add a minimum cost of processing the food into a ready to eat product to the cost of meeting the minimum energy requirement to come up with what is known as survival threshold. Households that are unable to meet this threshold are said to be facing a survival deficit.

It is important to note that not in every case do households face a survival or food deficit when a hazard or shock occurs. Households try to respond to shocks by resorting to normal coping mechanisms such as sale of livestock etc. In case this is not enough to meet the missing food energy requirement, households may decide to reduce or completely forgo non essential expenditure. In the worst case scenario, households will be forced to switch or forgo essential expenditure e.g. school fees, fertilizer purchase etc in order to save money to buy food. If households are no longer able to afford essential items such as school fees, agricultural inputs, health care etc, then they are said to be facing a livelihoods protection deficit.

In conclusion, the HEA approach takes into account different types of food/income and their sources; and ability of households to cope (resilience) when faced with a shock or hazard. Households are said to be facing a food deficit if they fail to make up for the initial shortfall after exhausting all their normal coping strategies.

The remaining Member States used other approaches such as household sample surveys to determine the number of food insecure population. Regardless of the approach adopted, the overall objective remains the same, which is to inform policies and programmes that would reduce household vulnerability in the SADC region.

4.2.2 Trends in food insecure population

For the purposes of the following summary, the following definitions of key terms will be used:

Food security: In this analysis food security is defined as where all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life.

Vulnerability Analysis: The analysis that has been used to determine the food insecure population is mainly based on the livelihoods approach which takes into account all the means by which households obtain and maintain access to essential resources to ensure their immediate and long-term survival e.g. crops, livestock, labour, remittances etc.

Results of VAA for 2012

A synthesis of the VAA carried out by Member States shows that food insecurity in the region is due to a number of factors including: reduced crop production in many areas of the region due to poor rainfall; reduced casual labour opportunities and unemployment especially for the economically disadvantaged households; high prevalence of poverty in the region affecting the ability of the population to cope with shocks; the impacts of HIV and AIDS which remain significant across the region; civil unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the on-going outbreaks of livestock diseases (e.g. foot and mouth disease) in Botswana and other countries.

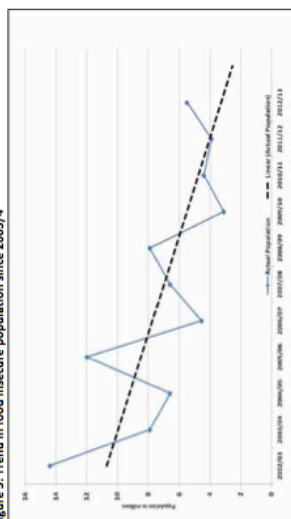
Compared to last year, the total number of food insecure population in the region has increased in all countries except Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia as shown in Table 4. Some of the affected areas have remained the same for a long period indicating chronic vulnerability and high levels of poverty. The percentage of food insecure population is exceptionally high in Lesotho at almost 40% of the total population. The DRC started providing number of food insecure population in 2011. The current analysis shows a 27% increase in the number of population from 4.3million to 5.4million.

Table 4: Food insecure population from 2003/4 to 2012/13

Country	2003/04	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2012/13 +1
Lesotho	650,000	720,000	760,000	840,000	940,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Malawi	3,200,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Mozambique	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Namibia	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Tanzania	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Zambia	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Zimbabwe	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
SADC*	14,400,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000
Sub-Region**	14,400,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000
UNEP***	14,400,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000
Source: **UNEP, ***UNEP										

The table above indicates a persistently high level of chronic food insecure population, resulting from frequent drought and poor rainfall. This situation indicates that unless the Region significantly reduces its high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, the problem of food insecurity is likely to increase as climate change phenomena further complicates the rainfall situation. Despite the overall declining trend in the food insecure population, the last three years show an increasing trend as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Trend in food insecure population since 2003/4

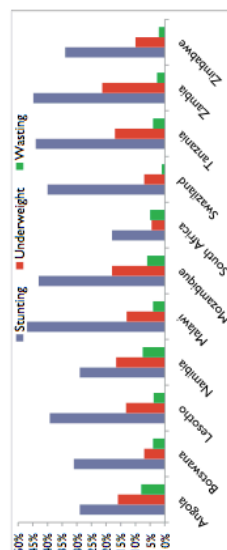


*Note: Excluding Angola, Botswana, DRC, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and South Africa.

4.2.3 Prevalence of malnutrition

Nutrition status is a result of complex interaction between food consumption and the overall status of health and care practices. Height-for-Age (Stunting) is an indicator of growth retardation and cumulative growth deficits reflecting failure to receive adequate nutrition over a long period of time. Weight-for Height (Wasting) index represents failure to receive adequate nutrition in the period immediately preceding a survey e.g. growing season. Weight-for-Age (Underweight) is a composite index of the above two and reflects general nutrition status. Stunting rates still remain very high in the Region but there have been slight improvements in wasting and underweight.

Figure 4: Prevalence of malnutrition in southern Africa

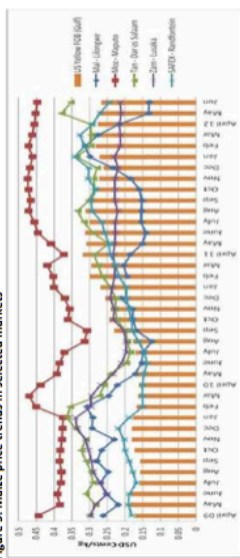


Source: VAC presentations, WHO, SOWC (childinfo.org)

4.2.4 Maize price trends

Maize prices in the three of the five major maize producing countries in the region are currently lower than the international maize price mainly due to improved supplies due to the recent harvest. However this may be short-lived due to the deficits experienced in many countries in the Region. Expected rise in global prices as a result of very poor harvests in the United States of America may also have a negative impact on maize prices in the Region. It may be prudent for Member States with huge maize deficits to import early before prices soar.

Figure 5: Maize price trends in selected markets



5.0 OVERVIEW OF COPING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY AFFECTED POPULATIONS

The affected households do not just sit and wait for outside assistance when faced with several of access to food and incomes but engage themselves in various coping strategies to minimise the impacts of the hazards/shocks. Although most of the VACs did not articulate the various coping strategies being employed by affected households in their respective countries, a few like Swaziland did and these are generally common across the region. Some of these strategies are summarised below.

5.1 Reduction in number and size of meals

Some of the affected households were reportedly reducing the number of meals per day and the size of meals in order to for their food to last longer in light of the reduced food stocks this season. This may in the long term result in increased malnutrition due to inadequate food intake unless timely interventions are undertaken to address the problem.

5.2 Expenditure switching and consumption of less preferred foods

As a result of shortages in household food supplies, some households are forced to switch expenditure from more expensive preferred foods and other essential items to less preferred and cheaper food items. Over half of the affected households in Swaziland reported to be employing this strategy.

5.3 Increased sale of assets

Increased sale of especially livestock is one of the common strategies employed by affected households across the region.

SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Synthesis Report - 2012	SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Synthesis Report - 2012
<p>5.4 Increased reliance on casual labour and self employment</p> <p>This includes affected households being engaged in more casual labour than before, sometimes at the expense working in their own fields resulting in a vicious cycle of food insecurity and poverty. There is also an increase in self employment activities such sale of firewood and charcoal, some of which have a negative impact on the environment..</p> <p>5.5 Other coping strategies</p> <p>Other extreme coping strategies such as stopping children from going to school and temporal migration were noted in Kilindi, Muleba and Ngorongoro districts of Tanzania.</p>	<p>6.0 COUNTRY VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND ANALYSIS (VAA) HIGHLIGHTS</p> <p>The following section provides brief summaries of the crop production performance in the 2011/12 agricultural season and food security prospects in the 2012/13 marketing year by country.</p> <p>6.1 Angola</p> <p>According to reports from the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries Angola received very poor rains during the 2011/12 crop season. The poor rains due to drought affected the whole country but more intensely in the provinces of Bengo, Kwanza Sul, Benguela, Huila, Namibe, Cunene, Mexico, Ite, Huambo and Zaire. Most of which are the main cereal producers in the country. As a result, available estimates indicate cereal production has gone down 38% from 1.41 million tonnes in 2011 to 876,000 tonnes in 2012. The cereal balance of the country indicates an overall cereal deficit of 1.34 million tonnes for the 2012/13 marketing year, as total domestic availability of 937,000 tonnes fall short of total domestic requirement of 2.28 million tonnes. The country is expected to face a tight food insecurity situation with assessments indicating that more than 1.83 million people may require humanitarian assistance, including food and non-food items such as farm inputs.</p> <p>6.2 Botswana</p> <p>Current production estimates from the National Early Warning Unit indicates a 26% drop in cereal production from 42,000 tonnes in 2011 to 31,000 tonnes in 2012, as a result of prolonged dry spells experienced in some parts of the country. However the production of maize has remained almost the same at about 10,000 tonnes this year, while a significant drop of about 33% for sorghum and millet has been assessed. The overall food supply/demand analysis indicates a cereal deficit of about 432,000 tonnes, which is higher than the 236,000 tonnes assessed in 2011/12 marketing year. The 2012/13 food security situation is, however, expected to remain satisfactory as current planned imports of 484,000 tonnes more than cover the assessed deficit. However food prices are likely to rise and this may adversely affect the food security situation of the poor households.</p> <p>6.3 Lesotho</p> <p>Crop production estimates from Lesotho indicate an overall cereal production of only 29,000 tonnes, which is 60% less than last year's harvest of 73,000 tonnes. The current production is also 68% below the five-year average of 92,000 tonnes. All the three cereal crops grown in Lesotho (maize, wheat and sorghum/millet) have recorded a drop in production compared to last season. Maize has recorded the highest drop at 67%, followed by sorghum/millet at 61% and wheat at 35%. The country generally experienced late onset of rains which resulted in late planting and some cultivable land being left fallow. This negatively affected crop production and reduced opportunities for farm labour incomes on which some 40% of the poor households depend. The food security situation in Lesotho has worsened with cereal deficit in 2012/13 marketing year assessed at 312,000 tonnes compared with the 2011/12 marketing year's deficit of 293,000 tonnes.</p> <p>The donor community is urged to allocate more resources to support the country import additional food during the 2012/13 marketing year in order to avoid critical food insecurity situation developing in the country. Vulnerability assessment indicates that some 726,000 people or 39% of the population may require humanitarian food and non-food assistance during the 2012/13 marketing year.</p>

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Appendix Two: Ethical clearance certificate



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Approval Notice New Application

08-Apr-2013
LANDMAN, Annie Petronella

Ethics Reference #: S13/03/045

Title: The role of evidence, institutional dynamics and policy arrangements in developing regional policies that promote resilient food system: The case of the Southern African development community's regional and national vulnerability assessment committees

Dear Miss Annie LANDMAN,

The New Application received on 12-Mar-2013, was reviewed by Health Research Ethics Committee 1 via Committee Review procedures on 03-Apr-2013 and has been approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: 03-Apr-2013 - 03-Apr-2014

Present Committee Members:

Kinnear, Craig CJ
Theunissen, Marie ME
Kearns, E
Weber, Franklin CFS
Unger, Marianne M
Rohland, Elvira EL
Theron, Gerhardus GB
Els, Petrus PIJS
Potgieter, Sunita S
Hendricks, Melany ML
Pillay, Mershen M

Please remember to use your protocol number (S13/03/045) on any documents or correspondence with the HREC concerning your research protocol.

Please note that the HREC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

After Ethical Review:

Please note a template of the progress report is obtainable on www.sun.ac.za/rds and should be submitted to the Committee before the year has expired. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit. Translation of the consent document to the language applicable to the study participants should be submitted.

Federal Wide Assurance Number: 00001372
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Number: IRB0005239

The Health Research Ethics Committee complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research and the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

Provincial and City of Cape Town Approval

Please note that for research at a primary or secondary healthcare facility permission must still be obtained from the relevant authorities (Western Cape Department of Health and/or City Health) to conduct the research as stated in the protocol. Contact persons are Ms Claudette Abrahams at Western Cape Department of Health (healthres@pgwc.gov.za Tel: +27 21 483 9907) and Dr Helene Visser at City Health (Helene.Visser@capetown.gov.za Tel: +27 21 400 3981). Research that will be conducted at any tertiary academic institution requires approval from the relevant hospital manager. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these health authorities.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.
For standard HREC forms and documents please visit: www.sun.ac.za/rds

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the HREC office at 0219389657.

Included Documents:

CV LANDMAN
BUDGET
SUP DEC LETTER
COVER LETTER
DEC LETTER
PROTOCOL
SYNOPSIS
CV2
APPLIC FORM
CHECKLIST
SUP DEC LETTER
CV3
IC CONSENT FORM

Sincerely,



Franklin Weber
HREC Coordinator
Health Research Ethics Committee 1

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the HREC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research.
2. Participant Enrolment. You may not recruit or enrol participants prior to the HREC approval date or after the expiration date of HREC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the HREC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your HREC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.
3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using only the HREC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least fifteen (15) years.
4. Continuing Review. The HREC must review and approve all HREC-approved research protocols at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the HREC approval of the research expires, it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in HREC approval does not occur. If HREC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrolment, and contact the HREC office immediately.
5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the HREC for review using the current Amendment Form. You may not initiate any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written HREC review and approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the HREC should be immediately informed of this necessity.
6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the HREC within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the HREC's requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Health Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures www.sun025.sun.ac.za/portal/page/portal/Health_Sciences/English/Centres%20and%20Institutions/Research_Development_Support/Ethics/Application_package All reportable events should be submitted to the HREC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.
7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of fifteen years: the HREC approved research protocol and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the HREC.
8. Reports to the MCC and Sponsor. When you submit the required annual report to the MCC or you submit required reports to your sponsor, you must provide a copy of that report to the HREC. You may submit the report at the time of continuing HREC review.
9. Provision of Emergency Medical Care. When a physician provides emergency medical care to a participant without prior HREC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor will the data obtained by any such activities should it be used in support of research.
10. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the HREC.
11. On-Site Evaluations, MCC Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the MCC, the sponsor, any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the HREC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

Appendix Three: Renewal of ethical clearance



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Ethics Letter

26-Feb-2014

Ethics Reference #: S13/03/045

Title: The role of evidence, institutional dynamics and policy arrangements in developing regional policies that promote resilient food system: The case of the Southern African development community's regional and national vulnerability assessment committees

Dear Miss Annie LANDMAN,

At a review panel meeting of the Health Research Ethics Committee that was held on 14 February 2014, the progress report for the abovementioned project has been approved and the study has been granted an extension for a period of one year from this date.

Please remember to submit progress reports in good time for annual renewal in the standard HREC format.

Approval Date: 14 February 2014 Expiry Date: 14 February 2015

If you have any queries or need further help, please contact the REC Office 0219389207.

Sincerely,

REC Coordinator
Mertrude Davids
Health Research Ethics Committee 2

Appendix Four: Endorsement letter from the VAC PMU



SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY SECRETARIAT

Private Bag 0095
Gaborone
Botswana

E-mail: registry@sadc.int
Website: www.sadc.int

Telephone: (267) 3951863
Telefax: (267) 3972848
(267) 3181070

SADC/14/10/3

15th April 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: ENDORSEMENT FOR PHD STUDENT CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON
POLICY PROCESSES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY'S (SADC'S) REGIONAL AND NATIONAL VULNERABILITY
ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES (RVAC AND NVACS)**

I would like to introduce you to Miss Annie P. Landman, known as Anri. She is a PhD candidate registered in the Division of Human Nutrition at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa and forms part of a research team investigating Social Learning for Sustainable Food Systems. Dr. Scott Drimie, well-known to the VAC network, is her supervisor. The South African National Research Foundation (NRF) funds the largest part of her research. She is currently in the second of a three-year study programme.

Her particular focus is on the role of Global Environmental Change (GEC) research evidence, institutional dynamics and policy arrangements in developing regional policies that promote resilient food systems. During the conceptualisation of her work, she found that the work accomplished by the SADC's RVAC and NVACs would form an ideal integrated case study for her investigation.

Member States:

Angola	Lesotho	Malawi	Namibia	Swaziland
Botswana	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	United Republic of Tanzania
Democratic Republic of Congo		Mozambique	South Africa	Zambia
				Zimbabwe

All correspondence should be addressed to the Executive Secretary

The objectives of her study include:

- To understand the catalysts and blockages in the development of policies that seek food system resilience;
- To determine the role of institutional dynamics in the RVAC and NVAC policy arrangements;
- To determine how policy arrangement changes have influenced policies that seek food system resilience;
- To describe the position of research evidence in RVAC and NVAC institutional dynamics;
- To describe how research evidence are used RVAC and NVAC policies that seek food system resilience;
- To make recommendations to the RVAC and NVACs with regards to the influence of institutional dynamics on policy arrangements, including influences on policy outcomes, to promote policies seeking system resilience; and
- To make recommendations to the RVAC and NVACs with regards to the position of research within policy processes, to promote policies seeking system resilience.

She has started analysing some of the policy, strategy and programming documents publically available on the SADC RVAC webpage to assess what research evidence is used in these documents, how it is applied and if it is associated with internal and external long-term resilience planning.

The subsequent steps of her research require drawing information through unstructured, facilitated and in-depth interviews with key SADC RVAC and NVAC members, possibly observing some RVAC meetings and further analysing policy, strategy and programming documents.

The findings of her research will be written up in a thesis as part of the requirements of her PhD degree. The outcomes of the research will be translated into a report to the SADC RVAC. This report will contain clear recommendations with regards to the influence of institutional dynamics and policy arrangements, as well as the application of GEC research in developing regional policies that promote resilient food systems.

She will always schedule interviews at times and places most convenient for participants. During the setup of interviews, she will clearly explain what each interview is about, expectations and the rights of the participant, and the fact that the interview is voluntary and that the participant can withdraw from it at any time without any negative consequences. Each participant will be asked to sign a consent form before the start of each interview. Participants' identities will never be revealed.

I urge you to support Anri during her investigation. Her work will provide a useful source of analysis for the Southern African VAC System and will open some new ideas for strengthening this important institutional arrangement. Your support in

Member States:

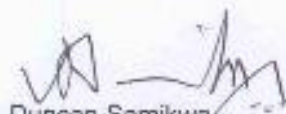
2

Angola	Lesotho	Malawi	Namibia	Swaziland
Botswana	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	United Republic of Tanzania
Democratic Republic of Congo		Mozambique	South Africa	Zambia
				Zimbabwe

All correspondence should be addressed to the Executive Secretary

enabling her to access appropriate policy, strategy and programming documents – some of which are not readily available on the website - as well as to participate in interview processes with her would be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,



Duncan Samikwa
Coordinator RVAA Project
for/Executive Secretary

Member States:

3

Angola	Lesotho	Malawi	Namibia	Swaziland
Botswana	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	United Republic of Tanzania
Democratic Republic of Congo		Mozambique	South Africa	Zambia
				Zimbabwe

All correspondence should be addressed to the Executive Secretary

Appendix Five: Discussion guideline for regional and South African interviews

Possible questions for introductory discussions with VAC members

1. Now that you've heard about the focus of this study I'd like to start by asking you to tell me a bit about your work with the VACs?
2. Could you please tell me more about the process of compiling VAA information?
3. Have these research findings influenced the operations of the VACs?
 - a. If yes, how?
 - b. If no, why not?
4. Could you please expand on any work you have done in policy development?
5. How does the VAC network approach the translation of VAA information into regional and national policy-making processes?
6. How would you say has the manner in which VACs make policies changed since you've started working here?
7. What has caused these changes or absence of change and how have these causes influenced the way policies are made?
8. Could you say something about the training and capacity building for practitioners working in VAA?
9. Where does the VAC's funding come from?
10. What do you think the role of institutionalising NVACs is? What are the advantages/disadvantages?
11. If you could only investigate 5 NVACs to gain a solid understanding of VAC operations, which ones would you choose and why?

Appendix Six: Discussion guideline for national interviews

Now that you've heard about the focus of this study I'd like to start by asking you to tell me a bit about your work with the VACs?

Probes:

Years of experience Research interests Responsibilities Involvement with policy-making

What is the purpose of the VAC system, and this NVAC specifically?

Probes

Compiling VAA information for who?
Development programmes?
Regional/national policy making?
Emergency interventions

Could you please tell me more about the process of collecting/compiling VAA information?

Probes:

How does it work?
What kind of information sources is used?
Who decides what kind of information is used?
What is the quality of sources used?
Who is responsible for collecting raw/compiling existing data?
Are communities involved in generating new information? How?
Who are the main audiences receiving/using this information?

How is VA information translated into regional and national policy-making processes?

Probes:

Is it a priority?
Do you have dialogues with policy makers?
Is there a website with all the information, which is marketed to policy makers?
Do you design reports to be accessible and useful to policy makers?
Who is responsible for it?
What is working?
What is not working?
Who else uses VAA information and for what?

Have VAA reports changed operations inside the VAC system?

Probes:

Analysis reports that have changed VAC focus?
Useful/less useful methods?

How does the funding work?

What is the staff turnover?

Are their coalitions within the VAC system?

How does leadership work?

Tell be about training within the VAC system?

What were the most significant changes in the VAC system, and this NVAC?

What has caused these changes or absence of change and how have these causes influenced the way policies are made?

Probes:

New people, coalitions
Funding
Leadership
Institutions
New research

Which NVACs would you consider most successful and why?

Probes:

Used methods
Position within government
Leadership
Funding

Appendix Seven: Information and consent form

Participant information leaflet and consent form

*For a research project that forms part of a PhD study at the Division of Human Nutrition,
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University*

Title of the research project - The role of evidence, institutional dynamics and policy arrangements in developing regional policies that promote resilient food systems: The case of the Southern African Development Community's Regional and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees

Principal investigator	Annie P. Landman (known as Anri)
Contact number	(+27) 84 506 8665
E-mail address	anriland@gmail.com

Dear VAC member

My name is Anri Landman and I am a PhD student registered with the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Stellenbosch. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project that aims to investigate the use of Global Environmental Change (GEC)¹ research evidence in food security policy development.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you have already agreed to participate.

This study has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at Stellenbosch University and will be conducted according to accepted and applicable National and International ethical guidelines and principles, including those of the international Declaration of Helsinki October 2008. The reference number for this approval is S13/03/045.

This research will be put towards a PhD thesis by the end of 2014. The focus of the research is on policy development processes and outcomes in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The research will focus specifically on the application of GEC research evidence in policies, strategies and programmes aiming for improved food system resilience. This research is thus important in the context of food insecurity in SADC.

SADC's Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs), both regional and national, will be investigated as an integrated case study. A review of VAC policy, strategy and programme documents; meeting observations; as well as interviews; and facilitated processes with a number of VAC members will inform the outcomes of the research. The outcomes of this research will in turn inform recommendations for governments and organisations developing policies, strategies and programmes that aim to increase the resilience of SADC food systems.

The study will be conducted in South Africa, Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. There will be as many sites in each country as there are selected interviewees willing to participate in this research. The number of participants in each country may vary, but no more than 20 interviewees across all countries will be interviewed.

The research involves a number of steps. You are invited to participate in one of these. I will clearly indicate to you which process you are expected to consent to and participate in before you sign this form. You will also indicate above your signature, which process you are consenting to:

- 1) The first activity is unstructured interviews with VAC members based in South Africa. These interviews will be conducted by me and will be unstructured. I might start with an open question, but then allow the interviewee to build his/her own narrative.
- 2) The second activity will be a NetMap process with the Programme Management Unit (PMU) of the RVAC in Gaborone, Botswana. NetMap is a participatory interview method that assists groups and outsiders to clarify views of a situation. With the PMU's informed consent, I will facilitate the process.
- 3) The third activity involves in-depth interviews with members selected from the NVACs in South Africa, Malawi, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. These interviews will follow a discussion guideline that is more structured than the South African interviews, but flexible enough to allow interviewees to express any opinions they feel are important with regards to this research.

You have been carefully selected as a key informant for this research. As a member of the VACs you hold valuable information that might not be available in policy, programme or strategy documents. Your experience and insights are essential in reaching the objectives of this study.

¹ GEC includes climate change, but also other ecological changes such as soil degradation, air and water pollution, and biodiversity loss.

You are expected to participate in an interview or NetMap process that will be scheduled at a place and time that suits you. You will be asked a set of questions, and or be facilitated through a participatory interview process. You are expected to participate or answer questions as honestly as possible and clearly indicated when you are unable to answer a question for whatever reason. Your perceptions are more important to the interview process than giving the “correct” answers. Please freely express what you think about the issues covered in the NetMap process or interview. Interviews will be limited to 60 minutes. The NetMap process should take no longer than 90 minutes.

With your permission, the interview or NetMap process will be recorded, and later transcribed by a professional transcription company that will sign a non-disclosure agreement. The recording will be destroyed after being transcribed. Your name will not appear on the transcription. I will analyse the interview transcriptions. My supervisors and/or evaluation panel may also view these transcriptions during my PhD evaluation. A number will be used to identify and refer to various interviews. Your opinions will remain completely anonymous.

The interview will provide an opportunity to reflect on your experience of working with the VACs. No other direct benefits are envisaged. Your participation will contribute towards a greater understanding of the application of GEC research in VAC policies, strategies and programmes. The research outcomes will be translated into a set of recommendations to the RVAC. As a participant in the research, these will also be shared with you directly.

Although interview questions will focus on the operations of the VACs and not personal matters such as your health or nutritional status, you might feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You may choose not to answer any questions.

Regardless of the fact that your identity will be protected by a number of security features, because of the relatively small number of interviewees and your affiliation with either the PMU or a specifically selected NVAC, there is a slight possibility that certain opinions could be assumed to have come from you. Your name, however, will not be mentioned in the transcriptions, any research reports, recommendations or the final PhD thesis.

There will be no cost to you to participate. You will not have to travel to the interview, as I will come to you. You will also not receive any form of payment.

You can contact my academic supervisors, if you have any further queries or encounter any problems:

- Prof. Milla McLachlan at (+27) 72 457 9007; or
- Prof. Scott Drimie at (+27) 83 290 3620.

You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee at (+27) 21 938 9207 if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the supervisors. The reference number for the ethical approval of this research is S13/03/045.

If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the attached Declaration of Consent. A copy of this information and consent form will be e-mailed to you before the interview for your own records.

Yours sincerely,



Anri Landman

Principal Investigator

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I (name) agree to take part in a research study entitled *The role of evidence, institutional dynamics and policy arrangements in developing regional policies that promote resilient food systems: The case of the Southern African Development Community's Regional and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees*.

I understand that I have been selected to participate in the following activity, which I have marked with an "X":

Unstructured interview		NetMap process		Structured interview	
-------------------------------	--	-----------------------	--	-----------------------------	--

I declare that:

- ☐ I have read this information and consent form in a language I am fluent in.
- ☐ I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- ☐ I understand my participation is **voluntary** and I have not been coerced to take part.
- ☐ I may leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- ☐ I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the principal researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the process as agreed to.

Signed at (place) on (date) 2013.

.....
Signature of participant

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

I (name) declare that:

- ☐ I explained the information in this document to (name)
- ☐ I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- ☐ I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.
- ☐ I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (place) on (date) 2013.

.....
Signature of investigator

Appendix Eight: Consent form for recording of interviews

PARTICIPANT'S INFORMED CONSENT FOR *RECORDING* THE ACTIVITY INDICATED ABOVE

By signing below, I (name) agree to being recorded whilst interviewed for a research study entitled *The role of evidence, institutional dynamics and policy arrangements in developing regional policies that promote resilient food systems: The case of the Southern African Development Community's Regional and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees*.

I understand that I have been selected to participate in the following activity, which I have marked with an "X":

Unstructured interview	NetMap process	Structured interview	
------------------------	----------------	----------------------	--

The purpose of the tape recording and the use, storage and final destruction of the tapes have been explained to me and I understand the explanation. I understand that I can ask that the recording be stopped at any time. All my additional questions concerning the procedures involved in the recording of the interview were also answered adequately.

Signed at (place) on (date) 2013.

.....
Signature of participant

Appendix Nine: Questionnaire to first interviewee to supplement two recordings

Just before you left I spoke a little about the benefits and negative consequences of **institutionalisation**. A less formalised VAC could mean more multi-stakeholder engagements, yet this is not guaranteed and the VAC would rely heavily on external funding. A more formalised VAC would mean that the government takes ownership and responsibility for the VAC, yet has in some instances also led to highly politicised VACs from which bodies outside of government is excluded.

I have a number of **questions** I'd like you to consider with regards to institutionalisation, but also feel free to add to the discussion anything you might feel is important.

- a) What is the purpose of institutionalisation?
- b) Why is it that **SAVAC** will be embedded in government?
- c) Were other institutional structures considered? If yes, which ones? If no, why not?
- d) Do you plan to manage the process of embedding the **SAVAC** in government to follow a specific route - are there specific outcomes with regards to the institutional structure of the **SAVAC** that you would like to generate?
- e) How do you see **SAVAC** engaging with the RVAC, NVACs, International Cooperating Partners and NGOs

- i) during the institutionalisation process? and
- ii) once it has been launched?

Appendix Ten: Code list with families, definitions as comments and merging histories

ALL CURRENT CODES

HU: The PhD
 File: [\[\\psf\Home\Dropbox\PhD Steps\Step 7 Analysis\The PhD.hpr7\]](#)
 Edited by: Super
 Date/Time: 2014-09-22 10:49:00

A academia

Created: 2014-07-16 13:41:57 by Super
 Modified: 2014-08-27 16:24:48

Families (1): Actors/networks
 Quotations: 14
 Comment: The environment or community concerned with the pursuit of research, education, and scholarship.

A Centre of Excellence

Created: 2014-07-17 11:50:45 by Super
 Modified: 2014-08-21 09:35:02

Families (1): Actors/networks
 Quotations: 18
 Comment: The CoE supposedly coordinating training and workshops for the VAC.

A Consultants/experts

Created: 2014-01-21 15:00:31 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (1): Actors/networks
 Quotations: 34
 Comment: A: Actor - Individuals who do not form part of the RVAC or NVAC, but that are paid on a contract-basis to assist various NVACS, and even the RVAC or RVAA PMU with technical challenges.

A DfID

Created: 2014-02-18 16:18:47 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-17 16:22:31

Families (1): Actors/networks
 Quotations: 17
 Comment: The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID).

A FAO

Created: 2014-07-09 17:06:20 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-02 10:30:14

Families (2): Actors/networks, ICPs
 Quotations: 80
 Comment: The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization.

A FEWSNET

Created: 2014-07-10 12:27:19 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (2): Actors/networks, ICPs
 Quotations: 21
 Comment: The Famine and Early Warning System Network

A FNC

Created: 2014-07-10 17:05:30 by Super
 Modified: 2014-07-17 14:32:48

Families (1): Actors/networks
 Quotations: 30

Comment: The Zimbabwean Food and Nutrition Council.

A Funders/donors

Created: 2014-07-09 10:01:03 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-04 14:15:31

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 38

Comment: The institutions providing the VAC with funding to do VAA work.

A Government

Created: 2014-01-21 15:09:21 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-16 12:37:04

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 234

Comment: Any national government within SADC participating in the VAC system - not necessarily an NVAC.

A Humanitarian Response Committee

Created: 2014-07-11 13:12:24 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:03:31

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 10

Comment: A committee that coordinates ICP interventions in the aftermath of emergencies.

A ICPs

Created: 2014-01-21 15:10:04 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-04 13:08:18

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 48

Comment: International Cooperating Partners including NGOs such as FAO, WFP and UNICEF.

A Media

Created: 2014-07-11 17:43:18 by Super

Modified: 2014-07-17 13:21:00

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 9

Comment: Talks of media reports that referenced VAC outputs.

A MVAC

Created: 2014-07-09 11:59:46 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 189

Comment: The Malawian VAC

A NGOs

Created: 2014-08-06 13:47:16 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Quotations: 37

Comment: Non-governmental organisations.

A NVAC

Created: 2014-01-21 15:10:04 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 08:02:45

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 29

Comment: A National Vulnerability Assessment Committee, that is either fully institutionalised, in the process of being formalised or simply working on a voluntary basis to fulfill the role of an NVAC (collecting relevant information and producing annual VAA reports).

A OCHA

Created: 2014-07-10 11:43:12 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-14 17:01:23

Families (2): Actors/networks, ICPs
Quotations: 9
Comment: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Action

A Other ICPs

Created: 2014-08-05 14:42:43 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:31:25

Families (2): Actors/networks, ICPs
Quotations: 16
Comment: ICPs that were mentioned less than 5 times or less in all the interviews.

*** Merged Comment from: IFPRI (2014-08-27T15:51:26) ***

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is an international agricultural research center founded in the early 1970s to improve the understanding of national agricultural and food policies to promote the adoption of innovations in agricultural technology.

*** Merged Comment from: UNDP (2014-08-27T16:31:24) ***

The United Nation's Development Programme.

A Other NVACs

Created: 2014-07-17 11:42:33 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-04 14:00:27

Families (1): Actors/networks
Quotations: 24
Comment: The Botswana VAC.

*** Merged Comment from: A NamVAC (2014-08-27T15:25:50) ***

The Namibian VAC - although this VAC did not form part of the selected NVACs that were investigated, it was mentioned in interviews a number of times.

*** Merged Comment from: A Tanzania VAC (2014-08-27T15:26:26) ***

The VAC based in Tanzania.

*** Merged Comment from: A ZambiaVAC (2014-08-27T15:26:46) ***

The Zambian NVAC.

*** Merged Comment from: A OXFAM (2014-08-27T15:42:34) ***

UK ICP

A Policy makers

Created: 2014-08-01 11:11:32 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 13:28:12

Families (1): Actors/networks
Quotations: 4
Comment: A person responsible for or involved in formulating policies, especially in politics.

A Private Sector

Created: 2014-08-01 09:39:34 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 15:43:48

Families (1): Actors/networks
Quotations: 7
Comment: The part of the national economy that is not under direct state control.

A Public/civil society

Created: 2014-08-06 08:52:51 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-07 15:36:04

Families (1): Actors/networks
Quotations: 13
Comment: *** Merged Comment from: A Public (2014-08-07T14:49:51) ***
References to public opinion or inputs to VAC work.

A RVAC

Created: 2014-01-21 15:10:04 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 50

Comment: The Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee - the first ever structure created within the VAC system, consisting of a similar multi-agency membership as the NVACs. The RVAC gives guidance to the VAC system.

A SADC

Created: 2014-02-06 14:43:38 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 10:27:39

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 41

Comment: The Southern African Development Community - SADC was established in 1980 by the Frontline States (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to accelerate the end of white-minority rule in South Africa under apartheid and to resist its influence in the region (Kandelwal 2004). It was transformed into a development community with the signing of the treaty of Windhoek in August 1992. With the collapse of apartheid, South Africa became a member in 1994, with Mauritius, Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo also joining as members later (Kandelwal 2004).

A SAVAC

Created: 2014-07-09 16:29:47 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-21 13:24:48

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 71

Comment: The South African VAC (in progress of being institutionalised)

A Save the Children UK

Created: 2014-07-10 11:18:37 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (2): Actors/networks, ICPs

Quotations: 30

Comment: UK ICP

A SETSAN

Created: 2014-07-09 16:29:26 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-16 12:37:04

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 95

Comment: The Mozambican VAC

A SwaziVAC

Created: 2014-07-09 16:27:13 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-22 14:23:22

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 19

Comment: The Swaziland VAC (has been struggling with institutionalisation for years).

A The vulnerable

Created: 2014-01-21 15:10:04 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:50:15

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 31

Comment: Those monitored by the entire VAC system - those supposed to benefit from its work.

A UN agencies

Created: 2014-08-04 08:40:27 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Quotations: 15

Comment: A collective referral to UN agencies.

A UN Resident Coordinator

Created: 2014-08-06 08:47:45 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 15:58:26

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 1

Comment: The person responsible for coordinating UN agencies within a country.

A UNICEF

Created: 2014-07-10 11:12:28 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 12:12:46

Families (2): Actors/networks, ICPs

Quotations: 26

Comment: United Nation's Children's Fund

A VAC

Created: 2014-07-09 16:34:25 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 21

Comment: The VAC system, which includes the RVAC and NVACs.

A WFP

Created: 2014-07-09 16:33:25 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 12:02:53

Families (2): Actors/networks, ICPs

Quotations: 126

Comment: The World Food Programme: <http://www.wfp.org/food-security>

WFP's unique network of food security analysts works closely with national governments, UN partners and NGOs. Their work informs the policies and programmes that WFP and its partners adopt in order to fight hunger in different circumstances. To collect, manage and analyse data, they use advanced technologies such as satellite imagery, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and mobile data collection platforms such as smart phones, tablets and Personal Digital Assistants.

Food security analysts do a wide range of assessments in order to identify hungry and food insecure populations and to establish the underlying causes. Examples include 'baseline' assessments (also known as Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analyses - CFSVAs), emergency assessments (EFSA) and market analyses.

For continuous monitoring of food security conditions and market prices, WFP is increasingly working with partners to establish Food Security Monitoring Systems (FSMS). Bulletins, reports, and analyses generated from all of these activities are public and can be downloaded from the Food Security Analysis Assessment Bank.

VAM's guidelines and references, provide the humanitarian community with up-to-date guidance, tools and tips to assess needs in different contexts.

A ZimVAC

Created: 2014-07-09 10:06:50 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 14:44:35

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 214

Comment: The Zimbabwean VAC.

Agriculture

Created: 2014-08-01 08:33:27 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-16 12:37:04

Families (1): Food security

Quotations: 70

Comment: The science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool, and other products.

AOM

Created: 2014-02-06 10:28:44 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-21 10:05:13

Families (1): Rules of the game

Quotations: 5

Comment: The VAC's Annual Organisational Meeting.

B Advisory role

Created: 2014-07-11 09:59:24 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-14 13:41:09

Families (3): Roles within the VAC, Power/resources, Actors/networks

Quotations: 5

Comment: Advising parts of the VAC on various aspects.

B Advocacy

Created: 2014-02-06 11:17:24 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-04 13:02:46

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 21

Comment: B: Behaviour - How VAC information is used to motivate for something else e.g. change, policy or funding.

B Collaboration

Created: 2014-01-23 15:13:28 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-21 13:24:48

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 40

Comment: Stakeholders working together to conduct VAA work.

*** Merged Comment from: B Negotiation (2014-08-27T15:44:34) ***

When consensus is reached only after a period of negotiation - trying to reach a middle-ground.

B Communication

Created: 2014-07-09 18:59:17 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-21 13:28:12

Families (2): Power/resources, Actors/networks

Quotations: 35

Comment: Sharing information in the VAC system.

B Competition

Created: 2014-01-23 15:45:58 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (2): Rules of the game, Actors/networks

Quotations: 16

Comment: When VAC stakeholders have to compete for resources and/or pushing their organisation's respective mandates

B Consensus

Created: 2014-07-10 15:18:11 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 27

Comment: Agreeing on issues, whether methods, outcomes or funding etc.

B Coordination

Created: 2014-01-23 14:37:33 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-16 12:37:04

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 32

Comment: Different stakeholders working with awareness of what other stakeholders are doing to do VAA work.

B Enthusiasm

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 22:30:19

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 25

Comment: VAC members' eagerness to get the job done, regardless of payment or promotion.

B Fear

Created: 2014-07-11 18:12:33 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 22:30:19

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 3

Comment: References to behaviour motivated by fear.

B Networking

Created: 2014-01-23 14:37:33 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-14 13:39:06

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 31

Comment: Actors using relationships with others to improve the flow of information and lessons learned etc.

*** Merged Comment from: B Partnerships/coalitions (2014-08-27T15:29:00) ***

A partnership exists as soon as 2 seemingly independent bodies have accomplished something together and plan to do so again in the future.

*** Merged Comment from: Coalitions (2014-08-27T15:30:02) ***

Shared interests, beliefs or agendas between VAC members.

B Ownership

Created: 2014-07-11 11:24:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 08:02:45

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 21

Comment: Talks about various agents needing to take ownership of the VAC. This might be related to accountability and responsibility.

B Responsibility

Created: 2014-01-21 15:10:04 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (3): Rules of the game, Actors/networks, Discourses

Quotations: 51

Comment: Discussions around responsibility or ownership with regards to disasters or VAC work.

*** Merged Comment from: Accountability (2014-07-11T19:40:33) ***

Discussions about how the VAC is/can be held accountable.

B Role changes/staff turnover

Created: 2014-01-21 15:10:04 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-22 14:34:46

Families (2): Actors/networks, Roles within the VAC

Quotations: 62

Comment: It often happens that VAC members move from government to an ICP to an RVAC and then to external consultant.

B Trust

Created: 2014-02-11 17:31:57 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 09:31:02

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 9

Comment: Trust between VAC actors and the aspects that improve or hinder it.

B Volunteering

Created: 2014-07-09 16:41:53 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-22 14:34:46

Families (2): Rules of the game, Actors/networks

Quotations: 8

Comment: References to individuals who do VAC work without getting paid for it.

C Disaster/emergency - context

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-04 14:15:31

Families (2): Context, Discourses

Quotations: 49

Comment: C: Context - An actual event that poses as an immediate threat to vulnerable people.

C Economic

Created: 2014-07-09 10:03:28 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:18:03

Families (1): Context

Quotations: 16

Comment: The economic context of a country or the region.

C Environmental

Created: 2014-07-09 10:03:04 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 10:28:36

Families (1): Context

Quotations: 22

Comment: The environmental context of the region or a country.

*** Merged Comment from: Weather (2014-07-09T11:33:29) ***

Any talk related to weather, including patterns and climate change.

C Political

Created: 2014-07-09 09:57:51 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-29 09:44:42

Families (1): Context

Quotations: 103

Comment: The political context of a country or the region.

*** Merged Comment from: Politics (2014-07-09T10:31:40) ***

Political issues that interfere with the running of the VACs or enhance it?!

C Scale

Created: 2014-01-23 14:31:51 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-14 13:41:09

Families (1): Context

Quotations: 51

Comment: The influence of the size of a country on research, policy making, resource allocation and reducing vulnerability.

*** Merged Comment from: EPA (2014-08-27T15:40:47) ***

Extension Planning Area

C Specificity

Created: 2014-07-09 09:58:13 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 16:05:20

Families (1): Context

Quotations: 49

Comment: Discussions about how important it is to be context-specific, whether doing research or planning.

Cash transfers

Created: 2014-07-10 11:27:53 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:18:03

Families (1): Responses

Quotations: 31

Comment: Instead of providing the vulnerable with food aid, some ICPs have started handing out cash instead, arguing that the cash

also invests in the local economy.

Census

Created: 2014-07-16 12:05:28 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 14:15:19

Families (1): Research process

Quotations: 6

Comment: Any references to making use of census data for VAC work, or using the census to include VAA indicators.

CERF

Created: 2014-07-10 15:27:35 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 12:37:00

Families (2): Method, Responses

Quotations: 9

Comment: Central Emergency Response Fund - a collaborated effort to detail an emergency situation within a country to raise funding for interventions, which are then distributed amongst ICPs according to their mandates and specific expertise.

Change

Created: 2014-02-11 10:17:55 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (1): Rules of the game

Quotations: 43

Comment: Evidence of structural or discursive changes within the VAC system.

Climate Change

Created: 2014-07-10 16:52:32 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 12:48:09

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 50

Comment: References made to the fact that the climate is changing.

Comparison / comparability

Created: 2014-08-04 10:59:57 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 15:32:05

Families (1): Research process

Quotations: 4

Comment: Discussions about whether or not it was important that VAA information be comparable across the region.

Credibility

Created: 2014-07-11 17:05:43 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process

Quotations: 19

Comment: The credibility of VAA information

Cyclones

Created: 2014-07-17 12:31:32 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 14:17:34

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 2

Comment: A system of winds rotating inwards to an area of low barometric pressure, with an anticlockwise (northern hemisphere) or clockwise (southern hemisphere) circulation; a depression.

DA

Created: 2014-02-11 17:00:22 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 18:55:06

Families (1): Discourses

Quotations: 47

Comment: DA stands for discourse analysis and it indicates areas where the interviewees use of language or their representation of information against what had already been established, proved false or highly questionable! :)

Decentralised

Created: 2014-08-01 11:01:36 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 15:31:21

Families (2): Policies/Programmes, Research process
Quotations: 8
Comment: Efforts by government to include the participation of civil society.

Disaster Management

Created: 2014-07-11 13:12:41 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:13:11

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 30
Comment: The management of responses after disasters occurred.

Disaster risk reduction

Created: 2014-07-11 13:07:25 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 14
Comment: Efforts that are pro-active, aiming to reduce risk, which could also be argued to be reducing vulnerability.

Discourse running ahead

Created: 2014-07-17 11:00:21 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 14:19:42

Families (1): Discourses
Quotations: 11
Comment: Discussions where it is clear that the interviewee feel that discourse have not yet resulted into concrete actions or implementation.

Disease outbreaks

Created: 2014-07-10 17:12:45 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 22:21:02

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers
Quotations: 3
Comment: The outbreak of diseases between people and their livestock.

Dissemination Meeting

Created: 2014-07-16 12:50:30 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 14:20:35

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 4
Comment: The meeting held annually to synthesise and disseminate VAA information.

Drought

Created: 2014-07-10 17:12:33 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 22:21:02

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers
Quotations: 19
Comment: Suspension of normal rainfall in an area.

Early warning

Created: 2014-02-12 08:05:12 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:58:06

Families (2): Discourses, Rules of the game

Quotations: 39

Comment: Discussion about previous or current early warning systems, or the use of the VAC to it, or suggestions of how to better apply VAC information for early warning.

Earthquake

Created: 2014-07-17 12:31:32 by Super

Modified: 2014-07-17 14:21:31

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 1

Comment: A sudden violent shaking of the ground, typically causing great destruction, as a result of movements within the earth's crust or volcanic action.

Economic Development

Created: 2014-08-05 09:48:21 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:33:04

Quotations: 21

Comment: Discussions about government efforts to build the national economy.

Education

Created: 2014-08-04 13:36:39 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 10:11:13

Families (1): Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 17

Comment: The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university.

*** Merged Comment from: Lack of education (2014-08-27T16:37:34) ***

The lack of receiving a basic education and its contribution to vulnerability.

Emergency/disaster/crisis -discourse

Created: 2014-07-10 13:49:13 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-17 16:20:35

Families (1): Discourses

Quotations: 50

Comment: Discourse about emergencies/disasters/crises and how to respond to them or address them etc. NOT actual events though.

Unemployment

Created: 2014-08-06 14:09:16 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:34:57

Families (1): Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 2

Comment: The state of having paid work.

Environmental Degradation & Programmes

Created: 2014-07-10 17:02:32 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:38:47

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 13

Comment: Aspects such as deforestation, silting in rivers, erosion etc.

Evidence

Created: 2014-07-16 14:53:28 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-21 18:59:38

Families (1): Rules of the game

Quotations: 10

Comment: Outputs that can proof something.

Exit strategy

Created: 2014-08-07 15:04:57 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:46:15

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 4

Comment: ICPs aiming to actually work themselves out of being relevant by empowering national governments to take over from them.

Farming subsidy

Created: 2014-08-05 14:45:07 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:48:32

Families (1): Policies/Programmes

Quotations: 12

Comment: Government providing farmers with free input or cash to support farming initiatives.

Fertiliser

Created: 2014-02-18 16:23:06 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 10:11:13

Families (2): Discourses, Responses

Quotations: 21

Comment: Any references to the application of fertiliser.

FIVIMS

Created: 2014-07-16 10:13:57 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-17 16:19:27

Families (1): Other Policy Arrangements

Quotations: 6

Comment: FIVIMS: Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System – A Planning and Decision-Making Tool (http://www.agis.agric.za/agisweb/FIVIMS_ZA)

A food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system is any system or network of systems that assembles, analyses and disseminates information about people who are food-insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity: who they are, where they are located, and why they are food-insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity.

FIVIMS is therefore an information management system – an arrangement of people, data, processes, information analysis and presentation, and information technology. These interact to support and improve daily operations of organisations engaged with the complex cross-sectoral dimensions of food insecurity and vulnerability, and helps facilitate more effective planning and decision-making.

Floods

Created: 2014-07-10 17:13:09 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:21:00

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 11

Comment: An overflow of a large amount of water beyond its normal limits, especially over what is normally dry land.

Focus Group Discussions

Created: 2014-07-16 15:21:55 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:49:24

Families (1): Method

Quotations: 9

Comment: A data gathering method involving many participants discussing issues in a group.

Food aid

Created: 2014-02-18 10:16:46 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:18:03

Families (3): Rules of the game, Responses, Discourses

Quotations: 66

Comment: Any discussions around food aid, being an intervention that supply vulnerable people in immediate crisis with immediate support.

Food for assets (ICP/NGO)

Created: 2014-08-07 13:14:00 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 15:50:03

Families (1): Policies/Programmes

Quotations: 12

Comment: A programme where ICPs/NGOs offer food in return for work on infrastructure identified as essential by communities.

Food security

Created: 2014-01-21 17:55:13 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 12:06:29

Families (2): Food security, Discourses

Quotations: 245

Comment: The classic definition - constantly having enough culturally acceptable nutritious food to live an active and healthy life. .

Forecasting/Scenarios/Predictions

Created: 2014-02-06 15:52:07 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:21:00

Families (2): Discourses, Rules of the game

Quotations: 37

Comment: The application of VAC outputs to recognise trends and predict future events

Frequency

Created: 2014-07-16 12:57:26 by Super

Modified: 2014-07-17 14:31:41

Families (1): Method

Quotations: 12

Comment: The frequency of VAA.

FS access

Created: 2014-07-16 10:43:28 by Super

Modified: 2014-07-17 14:30:31

Families (1): Food security

Quotations: 10

Comment:
The access dimension of food security.

FS Access

Created: 2014-07-16 10:43:10 by Super

Modified: 2014-07-17 14:13:48

Families (1): Discourses

Quotations: 4

Comment:
This refers to the access dimension of food security.

FS availability

Created: 2014-07-11 14:51:54 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 12:06:29

Families (1): Food security

Quotations: 39

Comment:
Talk about food production or the amount of food available on the market.

FS Utilisation

Created: 2014-08-01 09:20:56 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:00:02

Quotations: 3

Comment: The utilisation dimension of food security.

Fs vs v

Created: 2014-08-04 07:54:27 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (2): Food security, Vulnerability

Quotations: 21
Comment: Instances where food security and vulnerability is confused.

Funder mandate

Created: 2014-08-05 10:24:07 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 15:58:52

Families (1): Mandates
Quotations: 2
Comment: The mandate of funders - the things they prefer to fund.

Gender

Created: 2014-07-10 17:07:38 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-07 20:13:32

Families (1): Discourses
Quotations: 4
Comment: References that link vulnerability to gender.

Government mandate

Created: 2014-08-01 12:50:57 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:04:44

Families (1): Mandates
Quotations: 8
Comment: The government's intentions relating to vulnerability.

Government role

Created: 2014-08-06 13:39:26 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-06 13:39:26

Families (1): Roles within the VAC
Quotations: 4
Comment: Roles of government within the NVAC

Health

Created: 2014-07-17 19:10:08 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-16 12:37:04

Quotations: 29
Comment: Any issues relating to health and vulnerability.

HFA

Created: 2014-07-10 15:43:29 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:13:11

Families (1): Other Policy Arrangements
Quotations: 1
Comment: The Hugo Framework for Action (HFA) is a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards. It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in the Resolution A/RES/60/195 following the 2005 World Disaster Reduction Conference.

History

Created: 2014-02-10 14:55:04 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-04 13:04:40

Families (2): Context, Rules of the game
Quotations: 81
Comment: Any narrative that relates to the history or development of the VAC system.

HIV/AIDS

Created: 2014-07-09 12:03:52 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-19 14:49:32

Families (1): Context
Quotations: 18

Comment: Human immunodeficiency virus infection / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is a disease of the human immune system caused by infection with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The term HIV/AIDS represents the entire range of disease caused by the HIV virus from early infection to late stage symptoms.

Human capital development :)

Created: 2014-08-06 14:30:00 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:05:48

Quotations: 5

Comment: *** Merged Comment from: Social capital (2014-08-27T16:05:48) *** The networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.

ICP mandate

Created: 2014-07-11 09:56:44 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-19 13:52:08

Families (3): Rules of the game, Actors/networks, Mandates

Quotations: 28

Comment: Mandates of International Cooperation Partners.

ICP role

Created: 2014-08-01 09:35:05 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (1): Roles within the VAC

Quotations: 29

Comment: The role of the ICP within the NVAC.

Individual differences

Created: 2014-07-11 11:24:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 12:20:30

Families (1): Actors/networks

Quotations: 6

Comment: References to challenges around individual differences such as "personalities".

Information system

Created: 2014-07-16 13:48:36 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 14:34:53

Quotations: 5

Comment: A system that holds information about a specific topic?

Infrastructure

Created: 2014-08-06 14:06:52 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:30:41

Families (1): Structures

Quotations: 6

Comment: The basic physical structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

Institutionalisation

Created: 2014-01-21 15:51:43 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:19:27

Families (1): Rules of the game

Quotations: 117

Comment: The process of embedding an NVAC within a national government structure.

Interview

Created: 2014-07-16 15:46:22 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 14:35:07

Families (1): Method

Quotations: 6
 Comment: Using interviews to gather data.

Irrigation

Created: 2014-02-18 16:24:04 by Super
 Modified: 2014-08-06 14:04:37

Families (2): Discourses, Responses
 Quotations: 16
 Comment: A system that can supply crops with water from a water source, which does not always only depend on rainfall.

Lack of consensus

Created: 2014-08-06 11:26:14 by Super
 Modified: 2014-08-27 16:07:22

Quotations: 3
 Comment: Stakeholders not agreeing.

Lack of standardisation

Created: 2014-07-16 13:30:36 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-14 13:39:06

Families (1): Catalyst to the VAC mandate
 Quotations: 6
 Comment: The lack of standardising methods used withing the VAC.

Livelihoods

Created: 2014-01-21 17:55:13 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-21 12:59:01

Families (1): Discourses
 Quotations: 51
 Comment: The classic definition - The livelihoods approach groups people into different categories according to their access to assets and their ability to combine them into strategies for a means of living – human capital, natural capital, financial capital, social capital and physical capital. Institutions, organisations, legislation and policies determine how these capitals are combined (FAO n.d.). A sustainable livelihoods means maintaining or enhancing capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base, and being able to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks. In 1992, in collaboration with the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System, SC-UK developed a method for predicting, assessing and monitoring famine. It was called the Household Economy Approach (HEA). By quantifying livelihood information and linking it to geographical areas, livelihood information became more practical for decision makers, indicating what impact a specific shock will have on livelihoods and food security (FAO n.d.).

Livestock

Created: 2014-08-03 17:43:36 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-02 11:58:06

Quotations: 16
 Comment: Farm animals regarded as an asset.

Local food aid procurement

Created: 2014-07-11 15:06:37 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-02 10:27:39

Families (1): Responses
 Quotations: 2
 Comment: A new trend by international agencies in SADC, where food aid is procured from the local country or from within the region.

Long term planning

Created: 2014-02-06 10:47:47 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-17 16:22:31

Families (1): Rules of the game
 Quotations: 57
 Comment: References made to the importance or lack of planning for the long term and not just responding reactively to immediate issues. Also note that this could be closely related to talks around resilience.

M EFSA

Created: 2014-07-08 14:26:18 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-06 09:03:18

Families (2): Method, Rules of the game
Quotations: 10
Comment: M: Method

EFSA - Emergency Food Security Assessment (of WFP)

An Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) analyses the impact of a crisis on the food security of households and communities. An EFSA is conducted when a natural disaster, a conflict or an economic shock causes food insecurity due, for instance, to population displacements. An assessment can be triggered by a sudden event such as an earthquake or a flood or by a slow onset crisis, for example a progressive deterioration of the economic situation. The EFSA can be in the form of an initial (6 to 10 days after the crisis), rapid (3 to 6 weeks after the crisis) or an in-depth (6 to 12 weeks) assessment. An EFSA answers the following key questions: Does the crisis have an impact on the population's food security and their livelihoods? How severe is the situation? Has the level of malnutrition been exacerbated by the crisis? How are people coping? How many people are food insecure and where are they? An EFSA includes a forecast of how the situation may evolve and an analysis of possible food and non-food responses.

M HEA

Created: 2014-02-12 15:39:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:10:10

Families (3): Rules of the game, ICPs, Method
Quotations: 78

Comment: The Household Economy Approach (HEA) is a framework for analysing how people obtain food, non-food goods and services, and how they might respond to changes in their external environment, like a drought or a rise in food prices.

M IPC

Created: 2014-02-19 10:25:00 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:10:10

Families (2): Method, Rules of the game
Quotations: 87

Comment: The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of standardized tools that aims at providing a "common currency" for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. This evidence-based approach uses international standards, which allow comparability of situations across countries and over time. It is based on consensus-building processes to provide decision makers with a rigorous analysis of food insecurity along with objectives for response in both emergency and development contexts. .

M Livelihood mapping

Created: 2014-07-16 13:06:34 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 14:41:20

Families (1): Method
Quotations: 26

Comment: Livelihood zoning involves more than just the drawing of maps. A livelihood zone map is of little use unless it is accompanied by a basic description of the patterns of livelihood in each zone, and ideally by an analysis of the underlying reasons for differences between zones. This means analysing in some detail the production and trade/exchange options in each of the zones and the influence that the underlying geography has on each of these. What is a livelihoods zone? Most livelihoods are complex, and are shaped by a wide range of factors. Generally, when defining livelihood zones we look at three primary factors.

M Market assessments

Created: 2014-07-11 18:11:04 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:18:03

Families (1): Method
Quotations: 16

Comment: WFP conducts assessments to analyse the impact of higher food prices on households' food security situation. The information collected on the exact extent of the price rise, on the consequences for households' access to food and food consumption, and on the impact on traders and market help design the most appropriate responses. WFP produces a quarterly bulletin presenting the trends of prices of staple food commodities in more than 30 most vulnerable countries and the overall cost of the food basket.

M Method promotion

Created: 2014-02-11 11:08:33 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:21:20

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 24

Comment: Expressions of support for specific VAA tools,

Malnutrition

Created: 2014-07-10 16:55:50 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-19 13:41:02

Families (1): Vulnerability drivers
Quotations: 12
Comment: A lack of receiving nutritious food.

MUAC

Created: 2014-08-09 11:45:54 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:35:11

Families (1): Method
Quotations: 6
Comment: Mid Upper Arm Circumference - nutrition measurement.

Multi-agency nature

Created: 2014-01-22 13:05:43 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:59:54

Families (1): Actors/networks
Quotations: 92
Comment: N: Network - Actors from different organisations working together to monitor and reduce vulnerability.

National development

Created: 2014-08-06 13:41:06 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:27:19

Quotations: 21
Comment: *** Merged Comment from: Development (2014-08-27T16:27:19) *** The process of developing or being developed.

New normal

Created: 2014-08-01 11:14:14 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 15:59:41

Quotations: 2
Comment: When people start regarding crisis or vulnerability as the new normal.

Nutrition

Created: 2014-02-06 10:31:08 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:59:54

Families (1): Discourses
Quotations: 89
Comment: The quality and quantity of foods that contribute essential vitamins and minerals to populations.

NVAC justification

Created: 2014-01-21 15:35:29 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-04 12:33:16

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 20
Comment: Whatever NVAC members feel the reasons for the establishment of the NVAC was.

NVAC process

Created: 2014-02-14 17:16:53 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:19:27

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 40
Comment: Any processes related to producing VAA and reaching the VM.

NVAC purpose

Created: 2014-01-21 15:35:29 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 12:59:01

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 80
Comment: Whatever NVAC members believe the purpose of the NVAC is.

NVAC selection

Created: 2014-07-09 16:40:18 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 19:00:50

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 4
Comment: Where interviewees from the first round of regional interviews selected the NVACs that I should investigate.

Orphan households

Created: 2014-07-11 15:28:34 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 19:52:36

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers
Quotations: 1
Comment: Talks of households run by minors due to losing both parents and/or grandparents and/or other guardians.

PD Authority

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (1): Power/resources
Quotations: 93
Comment:
PD: Power which is dispositional - one has power because of your position within a structure

Being in a position of power to make certain decisions or drive certain processes, or to block them.

PD PMU support

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (1): Power/resources
Quotations: 24
Comment: The RVAA Programme Management Unit delivers funding and/or technical assistance.

Peer-to-peer learning

Created: 2014-08-04 10:59:40 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:28:00

Families (1): Training
Quotations: 11
Comment: A form of training within the VAC.

Pests

Created: 2014-07-10 17:12:59 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 12:24:23

Families (1): Vulnerability drivers
Quotations: 1
Comment: References to pests that destroyed crops, threatened livelihoods and thus contributed to vulnerability.

Platform

Created: 2014-07-10 11:52:08 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 12:24:36

Families (1): Rules of the game
Quotations: 13
Comment: References to the VAC system operating as a platform.

Poverty

Created: 2014-07-10 16:53:17 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:20:35

Families (2): Context, Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 26

Comment: References to people's lack of access to assets and its contribution to vulnerability.

PP Monitoring and evaluation

Created: 2014-01-21 15:49:16 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 12:59:01

Families (2): Rules of the game, Policy process

Quotations: 56

Comment: Following up on implemented policies and feeding back to adjust the policy as needed.

PP Planning

Created: 2014-07-09 11:59:06 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-04 14:00:27

Families (2): Rules of the game, Policy process

Quotations: 9

Comment: Planning that supposedly comes after policies.

PP Policy

Created: 2014-01-23 15:40:11 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 18:57:20

Families (2): Rules of the game, Policy process

Quotations: 55

Comment: The actual policy document.

PP Policy dialogue

Created: 2014-07-11 18:59:08 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 21:55:49

Families (2): Discourses, Policy process

Quotations: 6

Comment: Discussions about policy.

PP Policy guidance

Created: 2014-07-11 18:42:14 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:28:36

Families (2): Rules of the game, Policy process

Quotations: 9

Comment: The VAC's use of existing policies to guide VAC work within the region.

PP Policy process

Created: 2014-01-21 15:49:16 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 13:24:48

Families (2): Rules of the game, Policy process

Quotations: 63

Comment: The steps that lead to the development and implementation of policy.

PP Programming

Created: 2014-02-06 15:46:53 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:13:11

Families (2): Rules of the game, Policy process

Quotations: 48

Comment: VAC work informing programming within SADC.

PR Capacity

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 114

Comment: PR: Power which is relational - an agent's capacity, access to resources and interactions with others. The ability someone has to generate a specific output, or the capacity an organisation has in terms of manpower to do the same.

PR Facilitation

Created: 2014-01-23 16:04:05 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-04 09:51:28

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 7

Comment: Being facilitated to complete VAC work.

PR False reporting

Created: 2014-07-11 15:33:28 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 15:32:03

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 14

Comment: VAC information being altered for political reasons.

PR Funding

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 189

Comment: Funding received from the PMU or elsewhere to do VAC work.

PR Incentives/salaries/payment

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-22 14:34:46

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 22

Comment: Linking with institutionalisation, the motivation for doing the work - going beyond volunteering.

PR Knowledge/understanding

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:18:03

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 26

Comment: VAC members' knowledge/understanding of vulnerability concepts/ methodologies/ reporting/ implications/ requirements etc.

PR Leadership/championing

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 61

Comment: One specific person in a VAC who drives the work.

PR Participation

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:19:27

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 30

Comment: The participation of VAC members in VAC work.

PR Technical support

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:30:14

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 52

Comment: Either from the PMU or outside consultants.

PR Training

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 07:57:14

Families (2): Power/resources, Training

Quotations: 82

Comment: Training delivered by the CoE or someone else - to better equip VAC members to do the work.

Priorities

Created: 2014-08-01 10:08:07 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:27:10

Families (1): Blockage to the VAC mandate

Quotations: 11

Comment: VAC work is often not a priority for governments.

PS Government structures (place of embeddedment)

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:28:36

Families (2): Power/resources, Structures

Quotations: 108

Comment: PS: Power which is structural - the structures that determine the flow of resources. The department in which an NVAC is embedded or will be embedded and the issues surrounding it.*** Merged Comment from: Line Ministry (2014-08-27T16:32:10) *** A ministry that plans instead of impliment.

PS ICP structure

Created: 2014-07-11 11:10:49 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (3): Power/resources, Structures, Actors/networks

Quotations: 6

Comment: The structure of International Cooperating Partners.

*** Merged Comment from: ICP structure (2014-08-27T16:33:59) *** The organisational structure of ICPs.

PS NVAC structure

Created: 2014-07-09 16:32:04 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 08:00:08

Families (2): Rules of the game, Structures

Quotations: 17

Comment: The way the structure of the NVAC influences the flow of resources and ultimately outputs and outcomes.

PS Political will

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 18:57:20

Families (1): Power/resources

Quotations: 25

Comment: The will of a government to drive the VAC agenda and monitor and reduce vulnerability in their countries.

PS RVAC structure

Created: 2014-08-01 08:34:41 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 08:00:08

Families (1): Structures

Quotations: 2

Comment: The structure of the RVAC that influences the VAC system.

PS SADC Structures

Created: 2014-07-09 18:18:46 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (2): Power/resources, Structures

Quotations: 14

Comment: SADC structures that influence the flow of resources and behaviour within the VAC system.

PS VAC structures

Created: 2014-07-09 18:20:50 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (3): Power/resources, Structures, VAC

Quotations: 20

Comment: The way the VAC system is structured in terms of authority.

Public Works Programme

Created: 2014-07-11 14:44:29 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-10 12:38:58

Families (1): Policies/Programmes

Quotations: 21

Comment: A programme that offers food or cash for work on infrastructure identified, as most needed by the communities whose members then also work to build the infrastructure.

Qualifications

Created: 2014-08-03 17:13:24 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:25:06

Quotations: 14

Comment: Formal qualifications held by VAC members.

Quality information

Created: 2014-02-19 15:34:30 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-22 11:34:30

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process

Quotations: 25

Comment: Quality control in producing VAA.

Resilience

Created: 2014-02-12 16:15:30 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:58:06

Families (1): Discourses

Quotations: 65

Comment: The resilience of complex systems can be defined as the amount of change systems can undergo while sustaining controls on structure and function; their capacity to self-organise; and the degree to which systems can learn and adapt to shocks.

Response

Created: 2014-07-10 15:40:13 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 12:02:53

Families (1): Responses

Quotations: 23

Comment: Any kind of response to emergencies.

RP Analysis

Created: 2014-07-09 11:12:15 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process

Quotations: 27

Comment: Descriptions of how VAA work is analysed.

RP Data gathering

Created: 2014-07-10 11:44:06 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:16:36

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process
Quotations: 25
Comment: Descriptions of how data is gathered for VAA.

RP Dissemination

Created: 2014-01-21 15:43:38 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 14:44:35

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process
Quotations: 95
Comment: RP: Research Process - The distribution of research results through reporting and or workshops.

RP Framework

Created: 2014-07-16 15:27:40 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:20:35

Families (1): Research process
Quotations: 3
Comment: Frameworks used during research processes.

RP Implementation

Created: 2014-01-22 13:22:13 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-16 12:37:04

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process
Quotations: 76
Comment: When research is somehow implemented.

RP Indicators

Created: 2014-08-06 15:50:40 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:24:02

Quotations: 15
Comment: Indicators used in vulnerability assessments.

RP Information integration

Created: 2014-01-21 15:42:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 12:48:09

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process
Quotations: 53
Comment: When data from various sources are combined to form one outcome.

RP Information management

Created: 2014-01-21 15:42:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-19 13:41:02

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process
Quotations: 23
Comment: The manner in which collected and synthesised information is stored and made accessible to users.

RP Methods

Created: 2014-01-21 15:42:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:21:20

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process
Quotations: 63
Comment: Methods used to collect data related to vulnerability.

RP Non-policy usage

Created: 2014-07-16 15:54:31 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-04 14:15:31

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process

Quotations: 95

Comment: When VAA information is used for reasons other than informing policy.

RP Presentation

Created: 2014-07-11 15:42:08 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-21 14:44:35

Families (1): Research process

Quotations: 21

Comment: The strategic presentation of VAC information to reach a specific objective e.g. depoliticising VAC information.

RP Questionnaire

Created: 2014-07-16 15:21:55 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:25:11

Families (1): Method

Quotations: 14

Comment: Set of printed or written questions with choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey.

RP Recommendations

Created: 2014-01-21 15:43:38 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 12:02:53

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process

Quotations: 46

Comment: Recommendations based on research outcomes, which links to the reduction of vulnerability in the SADC region.

RP Reporting

Created: 2014-01-21 15:42:56 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-21 14:44:35

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process

Quotations: 59

Comment: The reports that come out of the research process, whether specifically for the VAC system or not.

RP Research process

Created: 2014-01-21 15:42:56 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-17 16:20:35

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process

Quotations: 77

Comment: Any planning, development and implementation that occurs during the research process.

RP Sampling

Created: 2014-08-07 14:22:38 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 10:10:10

Quotations: 30

Comment: Methods used for sampling during research processes.

RP training

Created: 2014-08-04 14:32:40 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:27:42

Families (1): Training

Quotations: 11

Comment: Training related to vulnerability assessments - the training of field workers.

RP Usage/uptake

Created: 2014-01-21 15:42:56 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-04 14:00:27

Families (2): Rules of the game, Research process
 Quotations: 125
 Comment: The uptake of research reports and other forms of research outcomes.

Rule of the game

Created: 2014-07-17 10:48:04 by Super
 Modified: 2014-08-27 16:07:38

Families (1): Rules of the game
 Quotations: 4
 Comment: Talks about the way people do things.

RUTF

Created: 2014-07-11 15:20:38 by Super
 Modified: 2014-07-17 14:51:08

Families (1): Responses
 Quotations: 1
 Comment: Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF) are high energy, fortified, ready-to-eat foods suitable for home based treatment of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Each pouch contains 500 calories. Its high caloric content, along with the high amounts of protein and fat, results in rapid weight growth, long-term muscle development, and a stronger immune system. If eaten two times a day for two to five weeks, a child can be saved from severe malnutrition.

RVAA

Created: 2014-02-06 15:47:51 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-17 16:22:31

Families (3): Rules of the game, Policies/Programmes, RVAA
 Quotations: 16
 Comment: The 5-year Regional Vulnerability Analysis and Assessment Programme.

RVAA purpose

Created: 2014-07-17 11:23:45 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-17 16:22:31

Families (1): RVAA
 Quotations: 7
 Comment: Interviewees' ideas around the purpose of the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme.

RVAC role

Created: 2014-08-02 09:19:07 by Super
 Modified: 2014-08-27 16:36:25

Families (1): Roles withing the VAC
 Quotations: 5
 Comment: The role of the RVAC within the VAC structure

SADC mandate

Created: 2014-08-04 10:53:09 by Super
 Modified: 2014-09-02 10:27:39

Families (1): Mandates
 Quotations: 2
 Comment: SADC's mandate.

School feeding programme

Created: 2014-07-11 18:23:50 by Super
 Modified: 2014-08-07 09:47:24

Families (1): Responses
 Quotations: 3
 Comment: A feeding programme for school children, rolled out during school hours.

Secondary analysis

Created: 2014-07-11 13:11:25 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-21 09:22:24

Families (1): Research process

Quotations: 15

Comment: Analysis of existing documents or datasets for VAA purposes.

Short term planning

Created: 2014-08-06 14:07:36 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 12:06:29

Quotations: 9

Comment: Planning that relates to emergency situations.

Social protection

Created: 2014-07-10 11:49:26 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 12:02:53

Families (2): Context, Policies/Programmes

Quotations: 12

Comment: Find out what this is, but a lot of people refer to social protection - it may be grants from government?

STAR QUOTE

Created: 2014-02-21 15:12:58 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:15:11

Quotations: 69

Comment: Quotes that prove points that I've suspected during the research process.

Statistics Unit

Created: 2014-08-04 11:09:47 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:22:29

Quotations: 21

Comment: National statistics units involved with VAC work.

Strategy

Created: 2014-07-11 18:40:48 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 12:02:53

Families (1): Policies/Programmes

Quotations: 17

Comment: Descriptions of strategies around vulnerability work.

Sustainability

Created: 2014-08-02 17:04:21 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:29:48

Quotations: 6

Comment: A reason for institutionalisation - the longevity of the VAC system.

Targeting of beneficiaries

Created: 2014-08-07 15:33:12 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:26:26

Quotations: 14

Comment: The manner in which beneficiaries are targeted for programmes or interventions.

Technical working groups

Created: 2014-08-05 10:04:56 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-27 16:11:15

Quotations: 3

Comment: To guide the introduction of emerging issues and innovations into the vulnerability assessment and analysis, the SADC RVAA Programme has established the following technical working groups:

Nutrition

Information Management
Urban Assessments
Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) for food security
Centre of Excellence and Capacity Building

Timeframes

Created: 2014-01-21 15:36:59 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:59:54

Families (1): Rules of the game

Quotations: 82

Comment: Any kind of perception of how long things should take, how long they actually take or any sense of non-urgency or urgency within the VAC system.

ToR

Created: 2014-08-03 17:11:29 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:26:41

Quotations: 12

Comment: Terms of References used in the VAC.

Transparency

Created: 2014-02-10 14:41:02 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-17 18:54:22

Families (1): Rules of the game

Quotations: 14

Comment: Aspects that contribute or hinder transparency within the VAC.

Transport and other logistics

Created: 2014-07-11 13:19:07 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 20:05:42

Quotations: 4

Comment: Often ICPs don't offer funding, but other forms of support such as transport.

Urbanisation

Created: 2014-07-10 16:52:13 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 21:55:49

Families (1): Vulnerability drivers

Quotations: 2

Comment: The migration of populations from rural to urban areas that result in the growth of cities.

Urgency

Created: 2014-08-04 13:26:11 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-27 16:37:06

Quotations: 5

Comment: Importance requiring swift action - related to vulnerability.

US-Aid

Created: 2014-07-11 12:39:05 by Super
Modified: 2014-07-11 13:34:59

Quotations: 4

Comment: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the United States federal government agency primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid. USAID has adopted as its mission statement "to partner to end extreme poverty and to promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing the security and prosperity of the United States."

V Acute vulnerability

Created: 2014-07-09 12:37:09 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-17 16:21:20

Families (2): Discourses, Vulnerability

Quotations: 32

Comment: Immediate vulnerability that can be resolved by short-term interventions.

V Chronic vulnerability

Created: 2014-01-21 17:55:13 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-19 15:05:49

Families (2): Discourses, Vulnerability

Quotations: 49

Comment: A complex convergence of stressors that contribute to a person/group's persisting vulnerability.

V Exposure (vulnerability)

Created: 2014-07-16 15:25:26 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-06 10:46:56

Families (1): Vulnerability

Quotations: 1

Comment: The aspect of vulnerability where one's exposure to a shock determines your vulnerability.

V Rural vulnerability

Created: 2014-08-06 08:05:45 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 16:05:20

Families (1): Vulnerability

Quotations: 22

Comment: *** Merged Comment from: Rural vulnerability (2014-08-07T12:55:05) *** Vulnerability linked to rural areas.

V Urban vulnerability

Created: 2014-01-21 17:55:40 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-02 11:16:31

Families (2): Discourses, Vulnerability

Quotations: 26

Comment: Whatever is understood by vulnerability, linked to the urban context.

V Vulnerability

Created: 2014-01-21 16:02:56 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-21 12:48:09

Families (3): Rules of the game, Vulnerability, Discourses

Quotations: 70

Comment: Whatever is understood by the term vulnerability.

VAA - VAC output

Created: 2014-07-16 13:28:49 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-14 13:39:06

Families (1): VAC

Quotations: 19

Comment: Vulnerability Assessments and Analysis

VAC justification

Created: 2014-07-09 10:56:23 by Super

Modified: 2014-09-01 21:35:42

Families (2): Context, VAC

Quotations: 12

Comment: Any references to why the VAC system was a necessary institution.

VAM unit

Created: 2014-08-06 09:32:51 by Super

Modified: 2014-08-19 14:10:55

Quotations: 25

Comment: *** Merged Comment from: M VAM (2014-08-06T09:34:19) ***I think this is WFP's Vulnerability Assessment Mapping - the

VAM is to WFP what the VAC system is to SADC. In countries without the appropriate structures to do vulnerability assessments, the VAM takes over that role. In countries where such structures exist, the VAM collaborates with them.

VM Catalysts

Created: 2014-01-21 17:42:26 by Super
Modified: 2014-08-21 22:35:22

Families (3): Rules of the game, Catalyst to the VAC mandate, VAC
Quotations: 19
Comment: Any catalysts supporting the VAC system in reducing vulnerability in the SADC region.

VM Challenges

Created: 2014-01-21 16:04:11 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-22 10:48:55

Families (3): Rules of the game, Blockage to the VAC mandate, VAC
Quotations: 267
Comment: Any challenges blocking the VAC system from reducing vulnerability in the SADC region.

VM Mandate

Created: 2014-02-06 14:42:32 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-21 12:48:09

Families (3): Rules of the game, VAC, Mandates
Quotations: 23
Comment: The actual VAC mandate.

VM Outcome

Created: 2014-01-21 16:04:11 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:18:03

Families (2): Rules of the game, VAC
Quotations: 8
Comment: An outcome is as a result of an output - e.g. reduce vulnerability as a result of an effective policy.

VM Output

Created: 2014-01-21 16:04:11 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 11:18:03

Families (2): Rules of the game, VAC
Quotations: 36
Comment: An output is necessary to reach an outcome - a policy could lead to reduced vulnerability.

WASH

Created: 2014-07-10 11:48:56 by Super
Modified: 2014-09-02 10:38:14

Families (1): Context
Quotations: 28
Comment: Programmes involving water, sanitation, hygiene and education.

Appendix Eleven: Code families

CODE FAMILIES

HU: The PhD
 File: [\[\\psf\Home\Dropbox\PhD Steps\Step 7 Analysis\The PhD.hpr7\]](#)
 Edited by: Super
 Date/Time: 2014-09-22 12:09:41

Code Family: Actors/networks

Created: 2014-01-21 15:13:06 (Super)
 Codes (51): [A academia] [A Centre of Excellence] [A Consultants/experts] [A DFID] [A FAO] [A FEWSNET] [A FNC] [A Funders/donors] [A Government] [A Humanitarian Response Committee] [A ICPs] [A Media] [A MVAC] [A NVAC] [A OCHA] [A Other ICPs] [A Other NVACs] [A Policy makers] [A Private Sector] [A Public/civil society] [A RVAC] [A SADC] [A SAVAC] [A Save the Children UK] [A SETSAN] [A SwaziVAC] [A The vulnerable] [A UN Resident Coordinator] [A UNICEF] [A VAC] [A WFP] [A ZimVAC] [B Advisory role] [B Advocacy] [B Collaboration] [B Communication] [B Competition] [B Consensus] [B Coordination] [B Enthusiasm] [B Fear] [B Networking] [B Ownership] [B Responsibility] [B Role changes/staff turnover] [B Trust] [B Volunteering] [ICP mandate] [Individual differences] [Multi-agency nature] [PS ICP structure]
 Quotation(s): 1245

Code Family: Blockage to the VAC mandate

Created: 2014-07-17 14:35:59 (Super)
 Codes (3): [Priorities] [VM Challenges] [Lack of standardisation]
 Quotation(s): 273

Code Family: Catalyst to the VAC mandate

Created: 2014-07-17 14:35:36 (Super)
 Codes (1): [VM Catalysts]
 Quotation(s): 25

Code Family: Context

Created: 2014-01-23 14:46:46 (Super)
 Codes (20): [C Disaster/emergency - context] [C Economic] [C Environmental] [C Political] [C Scale] [C Specificity] [Climate Change] [Cyclones] [Disease outbreaks] [Drought] [Earthquake] [Environmental Degradation & Programmes] [Floods] [History] [HIV/AIDS] [Orphan households] [Poverty] [Social protection] [VAC justification] [WASH]
 Quotation(s): 466

Code Family: Discourses

Created: 2014-01-21 16:06:24 (Super)
 Codes (21): [B Responsibility] [C Disaster/emergency - context] [DA] [Discourse running ahead] [Early warning] [Emergency/disaster/crisis -discourse] [Fertiliser] [Food aid] [Food security] [Forecasting/Scenarios/Predictions] [FS Access] [Gender] [Irrigation] [Livelihoods] [Nutrition] [PP Policy dialogue] [Resilience] [V Acute vulnerability] [V Chronic vulnerability] [V Urban vulnerability] [V Vulnerability]
 Quotation(s): 690

Code Family: Food security

Created: 2014-07-17 14:29:53 (Super)
 Codes (5): [Agriculture] [Food security] [FS access] [FS availability] [fs vs v]
 Quotation(s): 319

Code Family: ICPs

Created: 2014-07-11 09:50:37 (Super)
 Codes (8): [A FAO] [A FEWSNET] [A OCHA] [A Other ICPs] [A Save the Children UK] [A UNICEF] [A WFP] [M HEA]
 Quotation(s): 315

Code Family: Mandates

Created: 2014-08-27 16:05:07 (Super)
 Codes (5): [Funder mandate] [Government mandate] [ICP mandate] [SADC mandate] [VM Mandate]
 Quotation(s): 59

Code Family: Method

Created: 2014-07-11 11:29:21 (Super)
 Codes (11): [CERF] [Focus Group Discussions] [Frequency] [Interview] [M EFSA] [M HEA] [M IPC] [M Livelihood mapping] [M

Market assessments] [MUAC] [RP Questionnaire]
Quotation(s): 224

Code Family: Other Policy Arrangements

Created: 2014-07-17 14:24:43 (Super)
Codes (2): [FIVIMS] [HFA]
Quotation(s): 7

Code Family: Policies/Programmes

Created: 2014-07-17 14:48:49 (Super)
Codes (7): [Decentralised] [Farming subsidy] [Food for assets (ICP/NGO)] [Public Works Programme] [RVAA] [Social protection] [Strategy]
Quotation(s): 90

Code Family: Policy process

Created: 2014-07-17 14:46:20 (Super)
Codes (7): [PP Monitoring and evaluation] [PP Planning] [PP Policy] [PP Policy dialogue] [PP Policy guidance] [PP Policy process] [PP Programming]
Quotation(s): 227

Code Family: Power/resources

Created: 2014-01-21 16:04:43 (Super)
Codes (20): [B Advisory role] [B Communication] [Exit strategy] [PD Authority] [PD PMU support] [PR Capacity] [PR Facilitation] [PR False reporting] [PR Funding] [PR Incentives/salaries/payment] [PR Knowledge/understanding] [PR Leadership/championing] [PR Participation] [PR Technical support] [PR Training] [PS Government structures (place of embeddedment)] [PS ICP structure] [PS Political will] [PS SADC Structures] [PS VAC structures]
Quotation(s): 708

Code Family: Research process

Created: 2014-07-17 14:44:56 (Super)
Codes (20): [Census] [Comparison / comparability] [Credibility] [Decentralised] [Quality information] [RP Analysis] [RP Data gathering] [RP Dissimination] [RP Framework] [RP Implimentation] [RP Information integration] [RP Information management] [RP Methods] [RP Non-policy usage] [RP Presentation] [RP Recommendations] [RP Reporting] [RP Research process] [RP Usage/uptake] [Secondary analysis]
Quotation(s): 664

Code Family: Responses

Created: 2014-07-10 12:04:29 (Super)
Codes (9): [Cash transfers] [CERF] [Fertiliser] [Food aid] [Irrigation] [Local food aid procurement] [Response] [RUTF] [School feeding programme]
Quotation(s): 153

Code Family: Roles within the VAC

Created: 2014-08-27 16:16:39 (Super)
Codes (5): [B Advisory role] [B Role changes/staff turnover] [Government role] [ICP role] [RVAC role]
Quotation(s): 102

Code Family: Rules of the game

Created: 2014-01-21 15:38:23 (Super)
Codes (56): [AOM] [B Competition] [B Responsibility] [B Volunteering] [Change] [Credibility] [Disaster Management] [Disaster risk reduction] [Dissimination Meeting] [Early warning] [Evidence] [Food aid] [Forecasting/Scenarios/Predictions] [History] [ICP mandate] [Institutionalisation] [Long term planning] [M EFSA] [M HEA] [M IPC] [M Method promotion] [NVAC justification] [NVAC process] [NVAC purpose] [NVAC selection] [Platform] [PP Monitoring and evaluation] [PP Planning] [PP Policy] [PP Policy guidance] [PP Policy process] [PP Programming] [PS NVAC structure] [Quality information] [RP Analysis] [RP Data gathering] [RP Dissimination] [RP Implimentation] [RP Information integration] [RP Information management] [RP Methods] [RP Non-policy usage] [RP Recommendations] [RP Reporting] [RP Research process] [RP Usage/uptake] [Rule of the game] [RVAA] [Timeframes] [Transparency] [V Vulnerability] [VM Catalysts] [VM Challenges] [VM Mandate] [VM Outcome] [VM Output]
Quotation(s): 1438

Code Family: RVAA

Created: 2014-07-17 14:51:23 (Super)
Codes (2): [RVAA] [RVAA purpose]
Quotation(s): 21

Code Family: Structures

Created: 2014-08-27 16:11:43 (Super)

Codes (7): [Infrastructure] [PS Government structures (place of embeddedment)] [PS ICP structure] [PS NVAC structure] [PS RVAC structure] [PS SADC Structures] [PS VAC structures]

Quotation(s): 161

Code Family: Training

Created: 2014-08-27 16:27:58 (Super)

Codes (3): [Peer-to-peer learning] [PR Training] [RP training]

Quotation(s): 99

Code Family: VAC

Created: 2014-07-17 14:54:09 (Super)

Codes (8): [PS VAC structures] [VAA - VAC output] [VAC justification] [VM Catalysts] [VM Challenges] [VM Mandate] [VM Outcome] [VM Output]

Quotation(s): 379

Code Family: Vulnerability

Created: 2014-07-17 14:23:08 (Super)

Codes (7): [fs vs v] [V Acute vulnerability] [V Chronic vulnerability] [V Exposure (vulnerability)] [V Rural vulnerability] [V Urban vulnerability] [V Vulnerability]

Quotation(s): 178

Code Family: Vulnerability drivers

Created: 2014-07-11 09:37:35 (Super)

Codes (14): [Climate Change] [Cyclones] [Disease outbreaks] [Drought] [Earthquake] [Education] [Unemployment] [Environmental Degradation & Programmes] [Floods] [Malnutrition] [Orphan households] [Pests] [Poverty] [Urbanisation]

Quotation(s): 138

Appendix Twelve: E-mail correspondence with selected interviewees regarding the power chart in Chapter Six

From: Anri Landman

Date: Wed, Aug 27, 2014 at 11:06 AM

Subject: Re: VAC system power diagram

Hi all,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. I am currently writing up my final thesis. The response to my e-mail about the power diagram on 20 June has been weak, which is not an issue for my research, as I could just reflect on the fact that participation in this exercise was poor. Out of the 17 people I e-mailed, I've received feedback from only four. I integrated the feedback to restructure the diagram. Thank you again to the four people who replied. Your comments have been incredibly useful.

If anyone else would like to comment or make suggestions to restructure the diagram, please do so before the end of this week. Your feedback need not be lengthy. A few sentences reflecting your thoughts are more than enough. If I don't receive feedback from you before the end of this week, I will assume that you agree with the original diagram as it stands.

Thank you for your time and efforts towards this exercise.

Kindest regards,

Anri

On Thu, Jun 26, 2014 at 8:33 AM, Anri Landman wrote:

Hi all,

Just another gentle reminder of the e-mail I sent on Friday. Please be so kind as to spend some time on it soon and send me your comments by tomorrow, 27 June. If you intend to work through the diagram, but need more time, please also let me know.

I would like to sincerely thank the additional inputs I've received since my last e-mail. Your contributions will remain strictly anonymous.

Kind regards,

Anri

On Tue, Jun 24, 2014 at 9:19 AM, Anri Landman wrote:

Hi all,

Just a gentle reminder of the e-mail I sent on Friday. Please be so kind as to spend some time on it this week and send me your comments by Friday, 27 June.

I would also like to sincerely thank all the wonderful inputs I've received so far. They've proved extremely insightful for the various sections of the VAC that the contributors represent.

Kind regards,

Anri

On Fri, Jun 20, 2014 at 1:36 PM, Anri Landman wrote:

Dear VAC members and affiliates,

I hope this e-mail finds you well and happy. I'm nearing the end of my PhD, spending most of my time writing up findings from the research I've conducted on the VAC system (including the RVAV and NVACs) in the past two years.

At the moment I'm writing an article with Dr Scott Drimie, whom you may be familiar with. The article specifically relates to actor networks and power within the VAC system, and their influence on VAC outputs and outcomes. We argue that power means both having access to resources, as well as achieving policy outputs. Nevertheless, we are critically aware that the one doesn't automatically imply the other.

Taking this idea of power into consideration, I would greatly appreciate if you could spend a few minutes considering the attached power diagram. It represents various actors in the VAC system, divided up into four quadrants: 1) The RVAC and NVACs; 2) the SADC FANR; 3) ICPs and funders, and 4) RVAA experts and the PMU. The size of each dot represents the size of the unit, which in some instances may be just one person. Please note that this is not an exact science. The closer the dot lies to the centre of the diagram, the more relative power (access to resources, and/or successful policy outputs) it has within the VAC. It's easy to see which actors we consider equally powerful, as they all lie in the same track around the centre.

Once you've had a chance to consider the diagram, we'd greatly appreciate your inputs. Whether you agree or disagree with the diagram, please don't hesitate to let us know. When suggesting a different size and/or placement for an actor, please specify why you would make such a change. If you'd like to suggest four different categories to what we've placed as the four quadrants, feel free to do so too. Also let us know if you feel we've left out crucial actors. However, please note that we can only include the SwaziVAC, SAVAC, SETSAN, MVAC and ZimVAC, as these are the only NVACs I've interviewed.

You have been carefully selected from the range of actors we've engaged with in the past two years, to represent some part of the VAC system. We want to include a wide range of voices. We sincerely appreciate your inputs in this regard, and look forward to your replies.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Best wishes,

Anri